



















J. Freeman

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# BODY OF DIVINITY:

WHEREIN THE

DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

ARE EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL LECTURES ON THE ASSEMBLY'S  
LARGER CATECHISM.

Ridgeley

BY THOMAS RIDGELEY, D.D.

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# CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	Page
THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, . . . .	vii
THE EDITOR'S PREFACE, . . . .	xi
LIFE OF DR. RIDGELEY, . . . .	xvii
THE INTRODUCTION, . . . .	1
NOTES.—The Authority of Creeds, . . . .	2
The Assembly's Catechisms, . . . .	3

## QUESTION I.

THE GLORIFYING AND THE ENJOYING OF GOD, . . . .	4
Man's chief end, . . . .	4
The glorifying of God, . . . .	4
The enjoying of God, . . . .	6
The connexion between the glorifying and the enjoying of God, . . . .	7
NOTES.—Divine desertion, . . . .	8
Paul's wishing himself accursed from Christ, . . . .	8

## QUESTION II.

THE BEING OF GOD, . . . .	9
Why proofs of the being of God should be studied, . . . .	9
Proofs of the being of God, . . . .	10
NOTES.—Natural religion, . . . .	20
Proof of the being of God from the absence of creative power in the creature, . . . .	23
Proof of the being of God from prophecy, . . . .	23

## QUESTION III.

THE TITLES, OBJECT, AND SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE, . . . .	23
The several names given to Scripture, . . . .	24
How the Scripture is divided or distinguished, . . . .	25
When God first revealed his will to man in Scripture, and how the revelation was gradually enlarged, . . . .	25
Whether the church, under the Old Testament dispensation, understood the written word, or the spiritual meaning of the laws contained in it, . . . .	26
Scripture is a rule of faith and obedience, . . . .	27
The properties of Scripture as a rule of faith, . . . .	29
Tradition not a rule of faith, . . . .	30
The completeness and purity of the canon of Scripture, . . . .	32
NOTES.—The Old and New Testament, . . . .	34
The sufficiency of Scripture, . . . .	36

	Page
Unwritten sayings of Christ, . . . .	36
The 'form of sound words,' . . . .	37
Paul's traditions to the Thessalonians, . . . .	37
Arguments against tradition, . . . .	37

## QUESTION IV.

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE, . . . .	38
The nature, necessity, and possibility of revelation, . . . .	38
Proofs that the Scriptures are inspired, . . . .	40
NOTES.—The genuineness and credibility of Scripture, . . . .	62
The harmony of the Scriptures, a proof of their inspiration, . . . .	69
Vindictive justice, . . . .	69
Proof of the inspiration of Scripture from the zeal which it displays for the Divine glory, . . . .	70
Consciousness of inspiration, . . . .	71
Modes and degrees of inspiration, . . . .	72
Verbal inspiration, . . . .	74
The evidence of miracles, . . . .	76
The spirits of the prophets subject to the prophets, . . . .	77
Inward testimony of the Spirit to the authority of Scripture, . . . .	77

## QUESTIONS V, VI.

THE TOPICS OF SCRIPTURE, . . . .	78
----------------------------------	----

## QUESTION VII.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, . . . .	79
General view of the Divine Attributes, . . . .	79
The Spirituality of God, . . . .	81
The Self-Existence of God, . . . .	82
The Infinitude of God, . . . .	83
The All-Sufficiency of God, . . . .	83
The Eternity of God, . . . .	85
The Immutability of God, . . . .	88
The Incomprehensibility of God, . . . .	90
The Omnipresence of God, . . . .	91
The Omnipotence of God, . . . .	92
The Omniscience of God, . . . .	95
The Wisdom of God, . . . .	98
The Holiness of God, . . . .	102
The Justice of God, . . . .	104
The Benignity of God, . . . .	108
The Goodness of God, . . . .	109
The Mercy of God, . . . .	109
The Grace of God, . . . .	109
The Patience of God, . . . .	112

	Page		Page
The Faithfulness of God, . . . .	119	General view of the doctrine of the	
NOTES.—The Communicable and the In-		Divine decrees, . . . .	254
communicable perfections of God, . .	123	The meaning of predestination, . .	257
Connexion between Uncompounded-		The truth of predestination, . . .	258
ness and Eternal duration, . . . .	124	The design and nature of the Divine	
Omnipresence, . . . . .	124	decrees, . . . . .	259
The absolute and the ordinate power		The meaning of Election, . . . . .	261
of God, . . . . .	124	Opinions as to the objects of election, .	269
The objects of God's knowledge, . .	125	Proofs that election respects only a part	
Man's natural knowledge of God, . .	125	of mankind, . . . . .	270
The disposing, the vindictive, and the		Proofs that election has reference to	
remunerative justice of God, . . .	126	sanctification, . . . . .	279
The harmony of the divine perfections, .	126	The elect are chosen in Christ, . . .	283
		The eternity, wisdom, secrecy, absolute-	
		ness, and unchangeableness of the	
		purpose of election, . . . . .	284
		Doctrine of reprobation, . . . . .	295
		Absurd consequences of denying the	
		doctrine of election, . . . . .	302
		Arguments for the opposite doctrine to	
		that of election examined, . . . .	304
		Objections to the doctrine of election	
		examined, . . . . .	308
		Practical inferences from the doctrine	
		of election, . . . . .	319
		NOTES.—The Foreknowledge of God, . .	321
		Election in Christ, . . . . .	322
		The necessity of the Divine pur-	
		pose, . . . . .	323
		Divine sovereignty and equity, . .	324
		QUESTIONS XIV, XV.	
		THE WORK OF CREATION, . . . .	324
		The meaning of the word Creation, . .	325
		Creation not eternal, . . . . .	326
		Creation effected by the word of God's	
		power, . . . . .	330
		Creation made for the Divine glory, . .	330
		The work of the six days of Creation, .	331
		The quality of Creation, . . . . .	336
		NOTES.—The six days of Creation, . .	337
		The time of creating out of nothing, .	340
		QUESTIONS XVI.	
		THE CREATION, NATURE, CHARACTER,	
		AND EMPLOYMENT OF ANGELS, . .	341
		NOTE.—The Angel who slew the Assyrian	
		host, . . . . .	346
		QUESTIONS XVII.	
		THE CREATION OF MAN, . . . .	346
		Why man was created last, . . . .	346
		Man created male and female, . . .	347
		Adam and Eve the first human beings, .	347
		The constituent parts of Man, . . .	350
		Man created after the image of God, . .	351
		The fallibility of Man, . . . . .	353
		NOTE.—The image of God, . . . . .	353
		QUESTIONS XVIII.	
		PROVIDENCE, . . . . .	354
		The meaning of Providence, . . . .	354
		Upholding Providence, . . . . .	354
		Governing Providence, . . . . .	355
		Particular Providence, . . . . .	356
		QUESTIONS XIX.	
		PROVIDENCE TOWARD ANGELS, . . .	365

### QUESTION VIII.

THE SUPREMACY AND UNITY OF GOD, . .	127
The Supremacy of God, . . . . .	127
The Unity of God, . . . . .	128
NOTES.—Proofs of the Unity of God from	
reason, . . . . .	133
Knowledge of the Unity of God	
among the heathen, . . . . .	133
The Simplicity of God, . . . . .	134

### QUESTIONS IX, X, XI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, . . . .	135
The importance of the doctrine of the	
Trinity, . . . . .	135
The doctrine of the Trinity a mystery, .	138
The doctrine of the Trinity not con-	
trary to reason, . . . . .	143
Whence the doctrine of the Trinity is to	
be deduced, . . . . .	145
Expository rules respecting the doc-	
trine of the Trinity, . . . . .	147
Definition of terms on the subject of the	
Trinity, . . . . .	149
The Personality of the Son, . . . . .	152
The Personality of the Holy Spirit, . .	153
The Personal Properties of the Son and	
of the Holy Spirit, . . . . .	156
The Sonship of Christ, . . . . .	160
The Procession of the Holy Spirit, . .	166
The Economy of the Persons in the	
Godhead, . . . . .	167
Proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity, .	170
Proofs of the Deity of Christ from his	
Titles, . . . . .	170
_____ his own statements, . . . .	193
_____ his perfections, . . . . .	197
_____ his works, . . . . .	206
_____ his being the object	
of worship, . . . . .	218
The Divinity of the Holy Spirit, . . .	230
The practical use of the doctrine of the	
Trinity, . . . . .	239
NOTES.—The communication of the divine	
perfections, . . . . .	241
The Sonship of Christ, . . . . .	241
The Spirit of Adoption, . . . . .	250
Substitution of 'Lord' for 'Jehovah,' .	250
The Angel-Jehovah, . . . . .	250
Proof of Christ's Deity from Rom. ix. 5, .	251
The doctrine of the Greek Article, . .	252
Genuineness of 1 John v. 7, . . . .	252
The 'Eternal Spirit' through whom	
Christ 'offered himself,' . . . . .	253

### QUESTIONS XII, XIII.

THE DECREES OF GOD, . . . . .	254
-------------------------------	-----



	Page
Providence toward the fallen Angels,	365
Providence toward the holy Angels,	367
The ministry of Angels,	368
NOTE.—The ministry of Angels,	369

## QUESTION XX.

PROVIDENCE TOWARD MAN IN PARADISE,	371
Man's outward condition in innocence,	371
Man's communion with God in paradise,	374
The institution of the Sabbath in paradise,	375
The covenant with man in paradise,	375
NOTES.—The Covenant of Works,	385
The design of the tree of life,	390

## QUESTION XXI.

THE FALL,	390
The freedom of Man's will,	390
Man left to the freedom of his will,	391
The Temptation,	392
The consequences of the Fall,	396
Practical inferences from the doctrine of the Fall,	398

## QUESTION XXII.

ADAM'S REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER, AND THE IMPUTATION OF HIS GUILT,	398
The federal position of Eve,	398
The representative character of Adam,	400
Christ not represented by Adam,	401
Man not represented by Adam after his fall,	402
The imputation of Adam's sin, and his representative character defended,	402

## QUESTIONS XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI.

ORIGINAL SIN,	405
The nature of sin,	405
The sinfulness of all mankind as fallen in Adam,	406
The origin of sin in man,	409
The conveyance of original sin by natural generation,	414
The connection of actual transgression with original sin,	416

## QUESTION XXVII.

THE PUNISHMENT CONSEQUENT ON ORIGINAL SIN,	416
The condition of those who die in infancy,	417
Punishment due to original sin in actual transgressors,	419
NOTE.—Infant Salvation,	422

## QUESTIONS XXVIII, XXIX.

THE PUNISHMENTS OF SIN,	425
The punishments of sin in the present life,	425
The punishment of sin in the future state,	433
NOTE.—The creation subject to vanity,	434

## QUESTION XXX.

GENERAL VIEW OF SALVATION,	436
The design and nature of salvation,	436
The subjects of salvation,	437
The reason of salvation,	437
General view of the Divine covenants,	438

## QUESTION XXXI.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE,	440
The meaning of the word Covenant,	440
Difference between a human covenant and the Covenant of Grace,	441
Proofs of the Covenant of Grace,	443
Distinctions as to the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace,	447
The Covenant of Grace as made with man,	449
NOTE.—The Covenant of Grace,	451

## QUESTION XXXII.

THE DISPLAY OF GRACE IN THE COVENANT,	452
---------------------------------------	-----

## QUESTIONS XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV.

THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE,	459
The administration of the Covenant under the Old Testament,	459
The administration of the Covenant under the New Testament,	467
NOTES.—The administrations of the Covenant,	470
The date of the Christian dispensation,	470

## QUESTIONS XXXVI, XXXVII.

THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE,	471
Christ the only Mediator,	472
Christ as Mediator is God,	475
Christ as Mediator is Man,	474
The distinctness of Christ's two natures,	475
The Reality of Christ's human nature,	476
The Incarnation of Christ,	478
The Date and Duration of Christ's incarnate state,	481

## QUESTIONS XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL.

WHY THE MEDIATOR REQUIRED TO BE GOD AND MAN,	483
Why the Mediator required to be God,	483
Why the Mediator required to be Man,	485
Why the Mediator required to be God and Man in one person,	488

## QUESTIONS XLI, XLII.

THE TITLES AND OFFICES OF THE MEDIATOR,	489
The meaning of the name Jesus,	489
Christ,	490
The offices of the Mediator,	492
NOTE.—The number of Christ's offices,	494

## QUESTION XLIII.

CHRIST'S PROPHETIC OFFICE,	495
The order of Christ's Prophetic office,	495
Christ's Titles as a Prophet,	496
Work as a Prophet,	496
To whom Christ ministers as a Prophet,	498
How Christ ministers as a Prophet,	498
The periods of Christ's ministry as a Prophet,	499

## QUESTION XLIV.

CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE, . . .	500
What it is to be a Priest, . . .	500
The types of Christ's Priesthood, . . .	500
The necessity of satisfaction for sin, . . .	508
The nature of the satisfaction required, . . .	510
The reality of the Atonement, . . .	513
The extent of the Atonement, . . .	519
Examination of arguments for Universal Redemption, . . .	525
NOTES.—The difficulty connected with the doctrines which relate to the order of Christ's Priesthood, . . .	540
Melchizedek was not Christ, . . .	540
The peculiarities of Melchizedek's order of Priesthood, . . .	543
Satisfying Divine justice, . . .	545
The altar on which Christ was offered, . . .	546
Christ's purchase, . . .	547

## QUESTION XLV.

CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE, . . .	549
The meaning of the word King, . . .	549
The subjects of Christ's Government, . . .	549
Christ's Government over his people, . . .	549
————— toward his enemies, . . .	556
The periods of Christ's Government, . . .	557
The millennial reign of Christ, . . .	558
The eternity of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom, . . .	575
NOTE.—The first resurrection, . . .	577

## QUESTIONS XLVI, XLVII, XLVIII.

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN HIS BIRTH, AND IN HIS LIFE ON EARTH, . . .	577
In what sense Christ humbled himself, . . .	577
Christ's humiliation in his birth, . . .	578
————— throughout his life, . . .	580
————— in temptations, . . .	583
NOTE.—Christ's emptying Himself, . . .	593

## QUESTIONS XLIX, L.

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN AND AFTER HIS DEATH, . . .	593
Christ's humiliation immediately before and in his death, . . .	594
Christ's humiliation after his death, . . .	602
NOTE.—'The spirits in prison,' . . .	606

## QUESTIONS LI, LII.

CHRIST'S EXALTATION IN HIS RESURRECTION, . . .	606
--	-----

The incorruption of Christ's Body, . . .	607
The reality of Christ's resurrection, . . .	611
The properties of Christ's risen Body, . . .	611
The period between Christ's death and resurrection, . . .	612
Christ raised by his own power, . . .	614
The effects of Christ's resurrection, . . .	616

## QUESTIONS LIII, LIV.

CHRIST'S EXALTATION IN AND AFTER HIS ASCENSION, . . .	616
The interval between Christ's resurrection and his ascension, . . .	617
Christ's ascension, . . .	619
The necessity of Christ's ascension, . . .	621
The ends of Christ's ascension, . . .	622
Christ's session at the right hand of God, . . .	623

## QUESTION LV.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST, . . .	624
The necessity of Christ's Intercession, . . .	624
Christ the only competent Intercessor, . . .	625
The Reality of Christ's Intercession, . . .	625
The difference between Christ's Intercession and our prayers, . . .	626
The manner of Christ's Intercession, . . .	627
The results of Christ's Intercession, . . .	628

## QUESTION LVI.

CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT, . . .	629
The object and period of Christ's Second Advent, . . .	629
The manner of Christ's Second Advent, . . .	631

## QUESTIONS LVII, LVIII, LIX.

THE APPLICATION OF THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION, . . .	633
What the benefits of Redemption are, . . .	633
The application of Redemption a Divine work, . . .	634
How and to whom Redemption is applied, . . .	634

## QUESTION LX.

THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT THE GOSPEL, . . .	635
Opinions and preliminary remarks respecting the salvability of the heathen, . . .	635
No salvation except by knowledge and belief of the Gospel, . . .	637
Salvation only by Christ, . . .	641
Christ the Saviour only of the Church, . . .	647



## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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THE influence which the different sentiments of men, in matters of religion, have, for the most part, on their temper and behaviour towards one another, affords very little ground to expect that any attempt to explain or defend the most important doctrines of Christianity, should not be treated with dislike and opposition by some, how much soever it may afford matter of conviction to others. This consideration would have put a stop to my pen, and thereby saved me a great deal of fatigue, in preparing and publishing the following sheets, had it not been overbalanced by what I cannot, at present, think any other than a sense of duty, in compliance with the call of providence. I heartily wish there were no occasion to vindicate some of the great doctrines of the gospel, which are now from misrepresentation less generally received than in the last age, as though the method in which they have been explained led to licentiousness, and the doctrines themselves, especially those of election, particular redemption, efficacious grace, and some others which depend upon them, were inconsistent with the moral perfections of the Divine nature. These are now traduced by many, as though they were new and strange doctrines, not founded on scripture, nor to be maintained by any just methods of reasoning deduced from it; or as if the duties of practical religion could not be inculcated consistently therewith. If this insinuation were true, our preaching would be vain, our hope also vain, and we should be found false witnesses for God, and have no solid ground whereon to set our feet,—which would be a most tremendous thought. And if this be not sufficient to justify my present undertaking, I have nothing to allege of equal weight.

I must confess, that when, about two years since, I took the first step for setting this design on foot, by consenting that proposals should be printed, I reckoned it little other than an expedient to disengage myself from any farther thoughts, and my friends from any expectation of it; which I could not well do, but by having a proof of the backwardness of persons to encourage, by subscription, a work which would be so very expensive to the undertakers. But the design being countenanced beyond what I could have imagined, and copies subscribed for with more expedition than is usual, I was laid under an obligation immediately to prepare my notes for the press, and set forward the work, which, through the Divine goodness, has been thus far carried on; and I cannot but take occasion to express my grateful acknowledgment of the respect that has been shown me, by those who have encouraged this undertaking. If it answer their expectation, and subserve their spiritual advantage, I shall count my labour well employed, and humbly offer the glory thereof, as a

tribute due to God, whose interest is the only thing that demands all our time, strength, and abilities. If I may but have a testimony from him that I have spoken nothing concerning him that is dishonouring to his name, unbecoming his perfections, or has a tendency to lead his people out of the right way to the glorifying and enjoying of him, my end is fully answered. Whatever weakness I have discovered arising from my being unequal to the greatness of the subjects discussed, I hope to be forgiven by God, whose cause I have endeavoured to maintain, and to be excused by men, as I may truly say, I have not offered, to either him or them, what cost me nothing. I have, as far as I am able, adapted my method of reasoning to the capacities of those who are unacquainted with several abstruse and uncommon words and phrases which have been often used by some who have treated these subjects, and which have a tendency rather to perplex than to improve the minds of men. Terms of art, as they are sometimes called, or hard words, used by metaphysicians and schoolmen, have done little service to the cause of Christ.

If I have explained any doctrine, or given the sense of any scripture, in a way somewhat different from what is commonly received, I have never done it out of the least affectation of singularity, or taken pleasure in going out of the beaten path; but have had as great a regard to the footsteps of the flock, as is consistent with that liberty of thinking and reasoning which we are allowed to use, who conclude nothing to be an infallible rule of faith, but the inspired writings.

As to what I have advanced concerning the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, I have thought myself obliged to recede from some common modes of explication, which have been used, both by ancient and modern writers, in discussing these mysterious doctrines, and which, if duly weighed, will probably appear not to have done any great service to the cause which, with convincing evidence, they have maintained. It is obvious that these modes of explication are what has principally given occasion to some modern Arians to fill the margins of their books with quotations from the writings of others, whom they have either, without ground, pretended to be on their side of the question, or charged with plucking down with one hand what they have built up with the other. Whether my method of explaining these doctrines be reckoned just, or not, I cannot but persuade myself, that what I have said concerning the subordination of the Son and the Holy Ghost, if it be considered in any other view than as an explication of the Sonship and the procession, will not be reckoned a deviating from the common faith of those who have defended the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. And if it be an error to maintain that these Divine Persons, as well as the Father, are independent, as to their personality, as well as their essence, or to assert that the manner of their having the Divine essence, as some express it, is independent, as well as the essence itself, then what I have delivered on that subject is to no purpose; and when convinced of this, I shall readily acknowledge my mistake, and count it an happiness to be undeceived.

As to what respects the decrees of God, and more particularly those that relate to angels and men,—his providence, as conversant about sinful actions,—and the origin of moral evil, I have endeavoured to account for them in such a way, as, I trust, does not, in the least, infer God to be the author of sin; nor have I, in any instance, represented God as punishing sin, or determining to do it, out of his mere sovereignty, as though he designed to render his creatures miserable, without considering them as contracting guilt, and thereby originating their own misery. And in discussing the freeness of divine grace, and the Covenant of Grace, as made with Christ, and, in him, with the elect, and maintaining the absoluteness of grace, and its independence of the will of man to become effectual to salvation, I have said as much as is necessary con-

cerning the conditionality of our claim to the blessings of the covenant, and the inseparable connection that there is between practical religion and salvation, and thus have defended the doctrine against the charge which is often brought against it, that it leads to licentiousness.

I could not omit to make this prefatory statement, that the reader might not entertain groundless prejudices against some of the doctrines discussed, before he duly weighs the method in which they are handled, or considers whether my defence of them against the popular objections be just or not. Some, it may be, will see reason to conclude that my defence of them is just; and others, who think that there are many unsurmountable difficulties to our view of them, may be convinced that there are difficulties of another nature as great, if not greater, attending the opposite scheme, which they themselves maintain. But this I rather choose to submit to the impartial judgment of those who are not disposed to condemn a doctrine, without desiring to know what may be said in its defence.

As to what concerns the work in general, it may be observed, that when I have occasion to illustrate an argument by making use of any criticism that may bear upon it, or to give the sense of ancient writers, either for or against what I have laid down, I have inserted my remarks in the margin, that they might not appear to be a digression, or break the thread of the discourse. I have also quoted at length most of the scriptures referred to in the margin, so that the words which are brought to prove or illustrate any particular head of doctrine, are connected with the discussion of it in one continued writing, and several repetitions of the same words thereby avoided.\*

The work is large, but the vast variety of subjects will render it more tolerable. The form in which it appears is somewhat different from that in which it was first delivered, in a public audience, though that may probably be no disadvantage to it, especially since it is rather designed to be read in families than committed to memory, and repeated by different persons, as it has been. The plainness of the style may contribute to its usefulness; and its being less embarrassed with scholastic terms than some controversial writings are, may render it more intelligible to private Christians, whose instruction and advantage are designed thereby. It would be too great a vanity to expect that it should pass through the world without that censure which is common to all attempts of the like nature; since men's sentiments in divinity differ as much as their faces, and some are not disposed to weigh those arguments that are brought to support any scheme of doctrine, which differs from what they have before received. However, the work comes forth with this advantage, that it has already conflicted with some of the difficulties it is likely to meet with, as well as been favoured with some success; and, therefore, the event hereof is left in his hand whose cause and truth are endeavoured to be maintained.

I have nothing farther to trouble the reader with in this preface; but would only request, that, what thoughts soever he may entertain concerning the way in which I have endeavoured to state and defend some great and important truths, he would search the scriptures, and explain them agreeably to the Divine perfections, and not think the worse of the gospel on account of the weak efforts of fallible men who use their best endeavours to defend it. If we had not a surer rule of faith, than the methods of human reasoning, religion would be a matter of great uncertainty, and we should be in danger of being 'tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.' But our best security against this, will be our having hearts 'established with grace,'

[\* Three sentences which refer to the mere indexing of the first edition are here omitted; and those which form the next paragraph, are transposed from the end of the 'Introduction.'—Ed.]



and rightly disposed to make a practical improvement of what we learn ; and, if we are enabled to follow on to know the Lord with minds free from prejudice, and if, under a due sense of our own weakness, we humbly present our supplications to Him who is 'able to make us wise to salvation,' we may then hope to attain to that knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, which shall be attended with peace and comfort here, and crowned with blessedness and glory hereafter.

May the great God, in whose hand are the life and usefulness of all men, honour with his blessing what is humbly offered to his service, so far as it is adapted to it, and approved of by him, that hereby it may be conducive to the spiritual advantage of professing families, and the rising generation.

## THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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DR. RIDGELEY'S *Body of Divinity*, if viewed, not in any one point of light, but in all its aspects, will, probably, be pronounced the best book of its class. In criticism, in erudition, in polemical tact, in rhetorical beauty, or in some other solitary excellence, it has, no doubt, been surpassed; but, in the aggregate properties of a luminous and well-adjusted summary of didactic and controversial theology, it has lived through upwards of a century without meeting its equal. No book in the English language, or, so far as I know, in any other, will serve so efficiently the purposes of a daily companion to a reflecting Christian in his inquiries into Divine truth, or a guide to a candidate for the Christian ministry in introducing him to his theological studies. Its parts are in their due proportion, and its properties in their due degree. Subjects great and small are not set up in niches of equal space, but extended or compressed according to their relative magnitude in the system of Divine truth; nor are they treated agreeably to the scope they afford for displaying the writer's acquirements and powers, and gratifying a popular taste for eloquence or a popular admiration of scholarship, but discussed with entire reference to their own intrinsic claims upon both the writer's care and the reader's attention. Dr. Ridgeley has, on almost every topic which he touches, the happy but rare art of knowing when he has said enough; and never, even when drawn, in justice to his subject, into extended dissertation, does he appear to forget that his work demands due space for the whole circle of revealed truths. He is not tempted, by love of declamation or of oratorical flourish, to write a sermon instead of a disquisition; nor by keenness of controversial spirit, to write long and arduously when an opponent is in the field, and not to write at all when no opponent, or but an insignificant one, appears; nor by attachment to a party, or fondness for denominational peculiarities, to write munificently in favour of his sect, and write like a niggard when the interests of his sect are out of view; nor by aptitude for abstract thinking, or critical analysis, or display of erudition, to array some topics in the glitter and gorgeousness of metaphysics and bibliographical scholarship, and either to append to minor or plain topics some trappings of learnedness, or to pass them undiscussed. His *Body of Divinity* is eminently distinguished by sound sense. We look in vain throughout its pages for any indications of the pedant, the bibliographe, the theorist, or the declaimer, and see only the labours of a sober, judicious divine.

But the prime excellence of Dr. Ridgeley's work is its simply evangelical character. He is, in all respects, what, in current phrase, is called a modern or moderate Calvinist; yet he calls no man on earth master, but draws his senti-

ments directly from the word of God. Though he uses the Assembly's Larger Catechism to give method and proportion to his prelections, he studies to explain, not any system of man, not Divine truth as moulded and superscribed by any human school of theology, but the doctrines of revelation simply as they present themselves in the sacred page. His book is not a tank, long, and laboriously filled with drainings from the roofs of human dwellings; but, in a great degree, the pure and pebbly strand conveying living water, limpid as it flows from the fountain of truth. He thinks on most subjects for himself, taking only the word of God for his guide; and is far from being a slave to the authority of great names among men, or to the influence of phraseology, which, though not found in the Bible, enjoys a prescriptive reputation of being orthodox. His general practice is to bring every mode of expression, no matter how generally sanctioned, to the test of scripture; and, though he brings out essentially the same results, or propounds radically the same doctrines, as are meant to be taught by language which he discards, he exhibits them with superior clearness and simplicity, and commends them with superior effect to the understanding and the heart. He is strongly averse, in particular, to the bewildering refinements, the multitudinous distinctions, and the complex and metaphysical expositions of the scholastic theology. In some instances, when he conceives them to have seriously obscured the truth or sanctioned error, he carefully analyzes them, and exposes their tendency; in other instances, when he feels them to be merely an encumbrance, he silently throws them aside, and exhibits his topics through the lucid medium of simple scriptural illustration; and, in general, he strives to write as if Aristotle's dialectics had never been enthroned in schools of theology, and the philosophy of the heathens never empowered to communicate its aspirings and its diction to ministers of the Christian faith. His work, as a whole, is, in consequence, remarkable for its combination of the most grave discussion and profound reasoning, with great clearness of conception and simplicity of statement; and it not unfrequently makes a difficult or an abstruse subject easy of comprehension to an untutored mind, when a work written in the scholastic manner would make a plain or obvious one nearly unintelligible.

In its original form, however, Dr. Ridgeley's *Body of Divinity* is marred by several important blemishes. "His fitness for the office of theological tutor," say Drs. Bogue and Bennet, in their *History of Dissenters*, "may be safely inferred from the lectures to his students, published in two folio volumes, composing a *Body of Divinity*. That they display soundness of judgment, extensive learning, and an intimate acquaintance with the sacred oracles, every impartial reader will allow. That he was a Calvinist, when we have mentioned his connexions, needs scarcely be told; but he differs, in several instances, from their commonly received opinions, and discovers a freedom of thought which shows a man determined to explain the scriptures for himself. *Had his style but possessed neatness, elegance, and force, what additional value it would have imparted to his ample treasures of sacred truth!*"\* His style is certainly extremely rugged. Had it but possessed a moderate polish, or had it even been free from great roughness and positive opacity, his book could scarcely have failed to command a lasting and most extensive popularity. But he offends readers of almost every class by his inelegancies, calls off their attention from his subject by his solecisms and grammatical inaccuracies, and not unfrequently perplexes or stultifies them by his ambiguities. One object of the present edition is to free his work from these defects. Every literary person—especially if he have had a little practice in preparing compositions by various writers for the press—is aware to what a

\* Vol. iii. pp. 282, 283.



great extent verbal alterations may be made upon an author, without, in the slightest degree, modifying his meaning, and even without perceptibly affecting his characteristic manner. To modernize an antiquated composition, or to beautify a vulgar one, is a very different process from pruning one, essentially correct and vigorous, of expressions which offend the taste or perplex the understanding. Dr. Ridgeley's style, exceedingly faulty though it was, required, in the Editor's judgment, no more than to be freed from its minor blemishes, and especially from its ambiguities, in order to appear, what Drs. Bogue and Bennet desiderate, "neat, elegant, and forcible." Nor has the Editor, in his attempts to improve it, made one-third the number of verbal alterations which, in the estimation of competent judges, might have fully comported with the preservation of its identity or distinctive character. He has substituted approved words for vulgar or obsolete ones; he has transposed adverbs and clauses so as to bring them into due collocation with the words which they qualify; he has repeated a nominative when it stood too far in the distance to be identified with a personal pronoun; he has broken up into consecutive order clusters of antecedents and relatives so hung together as to appear an undistinguishable mass; he has erased or altered expletives, lopped off redundancies, supplied obscure ellipses, and endeavoured to introduce a luminous punctuation; but, after all, he has not interfered with the author's *manner*, but has only removed impediments to his being understood,—labouring to improve, not his elegance, nor what is rhetorically termed *style*, but simply his *perspicuity*. The Editor may state, too, that, in his verbal alterations and transpositions, he has faithfully and sedulously guarded against interfering, in the remotest degree, with any sentiment of the author, or even with a perceptible shading of the most subordinate idea. Frequently, in dealing with Dr. Ridgeley's multitudinous and very serious ambiguities, he read passages several times, repeatedly examined them in their contextual connexion, and even, in some instances, compared them with parallel or kindred passages in other parts of the work, before he allowed himself to be quite assured as to the precise ideas which were meant to be expressed; and whenever he did not obtain entire conviction, or whenever the least ground remained for doubt that persons of different views might contend for different meanings, he chose—especially as the aggregate number of such cases was very small—rather to let the ambiguities remain, than to incur even a remote risk of altering the sense, or shake the confidence of the most fastidious reader in the integrity of the work.

Another blemish in former editions of Dr. Ridgeley's *Body of Divinity*, was numerousness and intricacy of methodical divisions. He derived this peculiarity, indeed, from the custom of his age; but, probably, carried it a much greater length than any contemporary writer. Divisions, redivisions, subdivisions, and re-subdivisions sometimes expanded like so many concentric circles, and revolved before the eye each in its series of distinctive marks and figures, till they became as unmeaning and confounding to the reader, as the mazy movements of a complex machine are to a man ignorant of mechanics. So intricate, in fact, were the subdivisions, that some of them appear to have perplexed even the author, or at least to have escaped from their due place, when he was reading his proof sheets; for, in the original edition of his work—which has been throughout employed in preparing the present edition—they, in some instances, are confounded with one another, or appear with inappropriate marks. Considerable care was requisite so to remove this heavy and compact scaffolding, as not to deface the edifice which it was employed to construct. By various devices, however, such as the introduction of sectional titles to the separable parts of a dissertation, and the substitution of particles of marked transition for a rapid series of minor figures, the Editor hopes that, without really altering Dr. Ridgeley's methodical arrangements, he has so

simplified them as to render luminous what was obscure, and obvious what was bewildering.

But the chief defect of Dr. Ridgeley—at least in the estimation of plain Christians, who wish to see truth only in the simple garb of scriptural statement, and have no taste for the meretricious adornings of false philosophy—is his having failed to carry out to its due limits his own important and distinguishing principle of bringing fully to the test the distinctions and refinements of the scholastic theologians. “I have, as far as I am able,” he says, “adapted my method of reasoning to the capacities of those who are unacquainted with several abstruse and uncommon words and phrases which have been often used by some who have treated these subjects, and which have a tendency rather to perplex than to improve the minds of men. *Terms of art, as they are sometimes called, or hard words used by metaphysicians and schoolmen, have done little service to the cause of Christ.*” In his repelling scholasticism, and writing as if the Christian faith had never been arrayed in the trappings of heathen philosophy, he certainly shot far a-head of his age, and stamped upon his Body of Divinity a value which could not have belonged to it had it been written, like almost every book of its class, in a technical and metaphysical manner; yet, on several very important doctrines, as well as on numerous subordinate topics, he retains, either altogether or to a considerable degree, distinctions and systematic phrases coined by scholastic or philosophizing divines out of the base metal of Aristotle’s dialectics, which, however current or however proscriptively orthodox, do not bear the superscription of heaven, and cannot add to the wealth of a man who desires to know Divine truth just as it is taught in the Bible. In some instances, he appears not to have detected the purely scholastic origin of refinements which long and general currency seemed to have sanctioned as unquestionably scriptural; and, in other instances, while not unaware of the utter absence of Divine sanction, he is prevailed upon by courtesy, or by amiable but undue deference to prevailing opinion, to invent plausible interpretations of phrases and dogmas which, when severely or even slightly tested by appeal to the word of God, are entirely indefensible. Though he excels other writers of Bodies of Divinity in freedom from the trappings of system and technicality and metaphysics, he still wears, if not the full uniform, at least the badge and the collar of scholasticism. Bold, on many points, to think for himself, and to study and write only in the light of scripture; he is, notwithstanding, timid or blindfold on others, and shrinks from the singularity of being the first to break every bond of connection between the theology of the Bible, and the heathenized theology of the Middle ages. Had he kept steadily in view his own prefatorial declaration, that “terms of art or hard words used by metaphysicians and schoolmen have done little service to the cause of Christ,” and had he been less complaisantly desirous not to ruffle the equanimity of his systematic and philosophizing theological contemporaries, he could hardly, with his fine taste for the simplicity of heavenly truth, and his intimate acquaintance with the sacred oracles, and his exquisite skill in making an evangelical doctrine appear tenfold more luminous when viewed apart from technical definitions, have failed to roll away from before the doctrines of grace or of modern Calvinism those fogs which have long bewildered disciples, and prevented the friendly approach of opponents. Seeing, as he does, how unwarrantable it is to apply technical distinctions to the doctrine of the Trinity, or to speak of faith as the condition of justification, he needed but a further exercise of his spirit of humble but faithful scrutiny, in order to see the equal unwarrantableness of applying technical distinctions to the everlasting purposes of the Divine mind, or to speak of the economy established with Adam as a covenant, of the various kinds and actings of faith, or of vowing and covenanting as part of the right observance of the eucharist.

The Editor, it will be seen, has appended about one hundred Notes—some of the length of essays or short dissertations—to various parts of Dr. Ridgeley's work. Most of these are intended, like the best and most distinctive parts of the work itself, to exhibit simply in the light of scripture, truths which are usually seen in the flickering glare of the schoolmen's flambeaux. Such readers as are partial to the scholastic theology, and never think a doctrine soundly stated except when dressed out in scholastic phrases and distinctions, will, of course, think the Editor's labour worse than thrown away. These, however, are not the persons who are likely to have a taste for Ridgeley in any form;—though, should any of them look into the present edition, they may be reminded that, in the conviction of men who look at doctrines without peering through a human medium, to exhibit the economy established with Adam as, not a covenant, but a sovereign institution of the Divine will, and faith as, not of various kinds, but various only in its objects, is not to deny the doctrines of original sin and of faith being a divine and sovereign grace, but to place these doctrines in the strongest because the simplest light, and to recommend them with the most forcible because purely scriptural evidence. Men who are attached to current extra-scriptural phrases, or who love to see a doctrine as complex, and profound, and prolific of distinctions as ingenuity can make it, are not likely, in the first instance at least, to relish either Dr. Ridgeley or his Editor; yet the moment they begin to see how much more beautiful a truth is when displayed in its own simplicity, than when disfigured by technical adornings, they will feel an incipient regret that Dr. Ridgeley's scrutinizing spirit did not circulate through every limb of his Body of Divinity, and, probably, may regard the present edition, with its appendage of Notes, as alive and energetic from core to extremity.

In writing Notes, whose object was not to discard scholastic refinements, the Editor's motives were various. In some instances, he presumed—very foolishly perhaps—to give fulness to an incomplete statement; in others, he supplied thoughts which the condition of science or of biblical criticism in Dr. Ridgeley's days did not enable him to possess; in others, he attempted, in brief space, to furnish an outline of definition and argument on topics which Dr. Ridgeley had omitted to notice; in others, he submitted views of important texts of scripture which he conceived more consonant with the context and with evangelical principles than those generally entertained; and in one instance—strangely enough—he saw Dr. Ridgeley, as he believed, mistaking that for a scholastic invention which is a fact stated by revelation, and felt himself incited humbly and reverentially to attempt to show, that, while “the eternal generation” of THE WORD and the modus of the Divine subsistence are matters on which the scriptures maintain silence, the fact of our Lord's divine Sonship, or of ‘the Son of God’ being strictly a Divine title, is an obvious and important part of a Christian's faith. Respecting the propriety, or even the doctrinal truth, of not a few of his Notes, conflicting opinions may probably be entertained. He has tried, however,—after the example of the eminent Author whom he has presumed to annotate,—not to write in slavish subservience to prevailing habits of phraseology, but, even at the hazard of being thought rash and unskilful, to carry reputed beauties in theological language from under the dim light of the taper, to seat them under the solar effulgence which beams from the page of revelation, and to invite attention to the claims which, as seen there, they have upon a Christian's admiration. His Notes, as nearly as he could judge and perform, have been constructed in keeping with the spirit and manner of the work which they accompany. He once thought of appending to Dr. Ridgeley's discussion of each doctrine directions as to the best writers, on both sides of the question, who might be read in order to attain a full acquaintance with the subject; but he was deterred both by the



unpretending yet really effective style of Dr. Ridgeley's own bibliographical hints, and by the alternative of either furnishing a dry and almost useless catalogue of names and titles, or attempting such formal critiques as, no matter how condensed, would have amounted in the aggregate to a miniature Bibliotheca.

The Editor feels, with shame, that he has said enough, far more than enough, respecting his own dwarfish labours, and by no means any thing like enough respecting the gigantic toils of his Author. Yet as his claims to notice are, strictly speaking, *those of the present edition of Dr. Ridgeley*, and not those of the Editor, he may be allowed to add, that, besides the improvements which have been already mentioned, "the Body of Divinity" is now, for the first time, enriched with a biographical sketch of its distinguished Author,—that it is accompanied with copious, general tables of contents, adapted to the sectional divisions which have been introduced,—and that, though the additions to the work, in the form of Notes, Index, Sketch, and otherwise, would amount, in the usual style of publishing, to a considerable duodecimo, the preparation of them has not occasioned more than one-third of the labour which has been expended on achieving results, which will not meet the reader's eye,—the correction of language and punctuation, and the simplifying of the forms or announcements of methodical arrangement. He may now leave the Publishers to speak, in addition, of a clearer type, a better paper, and a lower price than in former editions. In conclusion, he fervently and humbly expresses a desire that He who leads Joseph like a flock, may bless the work as an instrument both of bringing the lambs to be carried in his bosom, and of 'gently leading those which are with young;' of imparting elementary saving knowledge to youthful inquirers, and of guiding matured Christians and candidates for the pastoral office into a course of scriptural, devout, studious, theological investigation.

## LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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THOMAS RIDGELEY was born in London about the year 1667. He appears to have had his desires early turned to the office of the Christian ministry; and, at a proper age, entered a private seminary in Wiltshire, where he enjoyed a suitable training. After finishing his academical course he returned to London; and, in 1695, was chosen assistant to the Rev. Thomas Gouge, the pastor of an Independent church, now extinct, which met at the Three Cranes, near Thames-street. In 1697, the church was thrown into confusion, partly by some imprudent language of a preacher who delivered a weekly lecture in their place of worship, and partly by a dispute between them and Mr. Gouge respecting a person who was proposed for fellowship. They, in consequence, lost several of their members, and sank into a diminished and low condition. Mr. Gouge, worn by unremitting application to study, and agitated by care and vexation, fell under a train of disorders, which, on the 8th of January, 1699-70, terminated in his death. Mr. Ridgeley now succeeded to the pastoral charge of the church, and to the arduous duty of repairing the disasters which had been laying it waste. Though, probably, not what is usually styled a popular preacher, and though certainly defective in those graces of diction which are pleasing to all persons and fascinating to many, he excelled in those qualifications which constitute a man 'an able minister of the New Testament,' and appears also to have possessed tact and discretion to work his way well through circumstances of difficulty and excitement. The church, at all events, speedily revived under his pastoral care, and, in the enjoyment of the Divine blessing, continued in a prosperous state, though never very large in numbers, during the whole period of his ministry. As a pastor, he was held in high esteem by his people; and, as a preacher, was in great reputation among discerning and judicious hearers. His ministry at the Three Cranes extended through the long period of nearly forty years, and, towards its close, was aided by the services of several assistants.

A few years after his pastoral settlement, Mr. Ridgeley was elected one of the six ministers of the Merchant's Lecture, which was delivered every Tuesday morning at Pinner's Hall; about the same time, he was elected to take part in the Thursday evening lecture, at Jewin-street; and during a considerable period of his life—in conjunction, first, with the Rev. John Billingsley of Crutched Friars, and next with the Rev. James Wood of the Weigh-House—he conducted an evening lecture, on the Lord's day, at the Old Jewry. His labours in connexion with these lectures seem to have been much appreciated, or at least were sufficiently noticed, to induce him to send to press some pro-

ductions of his pen. He published, in 1717, "The Abuse of Feasting and Recreations, considered in a Sermon at the evening lecture in Jewin-street;" in 1719, "The advantage of falling into the hand of God, rather than man; a Sermon preached at the evening lecture in the Old Jewry, on the death of Mr. Nathan Hall, who was found murdered by a highwayman;" and, in 1725, "The doctrine of Original Sin considered; being the substance of two Sermons at Pinnar's Hall; with a postscript." Previous to the last of these dates, he published also "A Sermon on the death of Mrs. Gertrude Clarkson," "A Sermon preached at the funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Banks," and "A Discourse concerning the Origin and Superstitious observance of Religious festivals."

In 1712, upon the death of Dr. Chauncey, the first tutor of the oldest Independent college in Britain, Mr. Ridgeley succeeded him in the theological chair. The place where the lectures to the students were delivered, is said to have been Tenter-alley, in Moorfields. The successional college of the present day, however, is that of Homerton; quite as respectably presided over now by the revered Dr. John Pye Smith, as it was, in the days of its infancy and youth, by Drs. Chauncey and Ridgeley. Mr. Ridgeley's coadjutor in the classical department, while he himself taught theology,—and his successor, in his own office, after his death,—was the eminent John Eames, F.R.S.,—an adept in literature, and an universal scholar, whom the celebrated Dr. Watts pronounced "the most learned man he ever knew." Mr. Eames taught the languages and mathematics, and delivered prelections on moral and natural philosophy; leaving the expansive and paramount subject of theology to occupy, as it ought, the undivided attention of his distinguished colleague. Whether Mr. Ridgeley delivered other prelections from the chair than those which compose his *Body of Divinity*, and what methods of training he adopted for maturing the knowledge and forming the pastoral character of his students, are facts not known; but, judging from the solicitude he displays to shut up every inlet of error, and his high estimate of the qualifications which a Christian pastor should possess, his proceedings in the college must have been sedulously directed to the production of nice and practical results. As a theological tutor, not only was he fully versed in every subject which might be discussed, and in the principles of every criticism which might be required, and in the opinions of every author who might be in question, but he possessed conciliating manners, great aptitude to communicate instruction, an accurate judgment as to the adaptation of any means to its proposed end, and apparently also warm concern to make his professorial labours in every possible way efficient. Whatever were his particular practices in superintending and educating his students, he confessedly was honoured with much success, and enjoyed the happiness of sending out to the Independent churches many ministers who were distinguished alike for their intellectual acquirements and for their pastoral and personal excellencies. Mr. Ridgeley used care, not only that his own duties should be rightly performed, but that his students should exhibit a fair promise of becoming fully able, through the Divine blessing, to perform theirs. In consequence of a complaint lodged with him, that some young men, chiefly the sons of ministers or of eminent private Christians, after completing their studies for the ministry, had not preached the gospel in a sufficiently lucid and zealous manner,—and in consequence also, we may presume, of prompt measures which he adopted to respond to the complaint and to attack the evil to which it pointed,—a society of devout men, matured and discriminating Christians, was formed to encourage young men of decided piety and talent to aspire to the pastoral office, and to exercise vigilant care that none were admitted to the theological college who did not, in addition to displaying good natural abilities, afford convincing evidence of being savingly converted to God, and thoroughly sound in the faith. Who that reflects on this fact, and that marks the sensitive interest in the



honour of the house of God, apparent in every part of Dr. Ridgeley's writings, and especially in those portions of his Body of Divinity which treat of the constitution of a Christian church, and of the qualifications and duties of a Christian pastor, can doubt that, as a theological tutor, he zealously laboured, in dependence on the Divine blessing, to fashion the young men under his care into the mould, not only of systematic divines, and correct thinkers, and able expounders of the dogmata of theology, but of humble, affectionate, unctuous, heavenly-minded pastors of the sheep and the lambs purchased with the blood of Christ? There are altogether too much formality, too much of routine, too much of set-performance and of stiff adherence to rule and method, in many of the processes currently practised for training the rising ministry. Mr. Ridgeley was a stranger to these: at least, we utterly mistake the watchful, reflecting, practical, solicitous spirit which pervades his writings, and which breathes, and breathes most redolently, in the few surviving facts of his history, if he was not, just as truly, and in all the details of adapting his efforts to particular emergencies and to the peculiar circumstances of individuals, a theological tutor who dealt closely and searchingly with every student under his care, as, in his pastoral capacity, he was doubtless an overseer of souls who 'watched as one that must give account.'

While Mr. Ridgeley filled the principal theological chair connected with the Independent churches, Arianism or Unitarianism—that most rampant of all heresies, which, during the fourth century, threatened far more than all "the ten persecutions" to extirpate Christianity, and which, in modern England, rapidly reduced the presbyterian denomination from being greatly the ascendant body of dissenters to a state in which they had scarcely "a local habitation and a name"—broke out with a virulence which, by combined wiliness and energy, menaced the whole community of nonconformist churches with destruction. To add to the confusion of the scene, the orthodox ministers were warmly divided among themselves as to the scriptural propriety of subscribing a summary of faith condemnatory of the menacing heresy. Some regarded subscription as a bowing to the Baal of human authority; while others regarded it—especially in the instance in question, when no human, and particularly no magisterial authority interfered to impose it, and when it was prescribed by the voluntary act of the parties concerned in it, and was virtually but a pious and solemn yet deliberate and most resolute declaration of opinion—as a salutary, scriptural, effective, and even necessary means of making a decided stand against ruinous error. Mr. Ridgeley took the part—and he took it boldly and firmly—of the subscribers. The distinction seems not to have been made before his days, and was but dimly seen by himself, and obscurely exhibited in his own writings, between a *declaration* and a *creed*, or between a profession of faith as decreed and made unalterable by man, and a profession of faith as simply stating the belief of subscribers at the moment of subscription, and as open to revision and amendment proportionably to increased acquaintance with the Divine word, and growing illumination by the teaching of the Divine Spirit. Mr. Ridgeley thought merely of the fearful heresy which seemed, like the bursting of a vast lake, to be silently, but with the force of a torrent, about to carry away before it the spiritual comfort and the religious homes of the evangelical nonconformist communities of England. His zeal—warm and inflexible, though calculating and based upon matured and heartfelt inquiry—was directed, not against any party system, but against what he knew, what he felt, to be doctrines dishonouring to God, and killing to the human soul. For once, perhaps, his usual and almost instinctive judiciousness forsook him. Believing the essential and saving doctrines of our Lord's true deity, and of his meritorious substitutionary atonement, to be in danger, he looked around him—too much, possibly, with a querulous eye—for causes

which had brought them into question; and he very readily, though somewhat hastily, concluded that the minute and metaphysical accounts which, first the schoolmen, and next orthodox protestant divines, in imitation of their example, had given of "the eternal generation of the Son," and "the procession of the Holy Spirit," and which men of bold temperament who attempted to comprehend the most sublime topics of revelation, and refused to credit whatever was too large for the grasp of their feeble reason, had ostentatiously quoted, and held up to condemnation, had been a chief occasion, possibly the only one, of the revival of Arianism. He hence was very naturally led to adopt extreme opinions in opposition to these scholastic refinements. Considering his admirable zeal for the cause of evangelical truth, and the peculiar circumstances in which theological science was placed—loaded with technicalities, trapped in innumerable distinctions, and encumbered, among the orthodox, with constant attempts to become 'wise above that which is written'—we need not wonder that he discarded the received doctrines of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, and of the Son being eternally begotten of the Father. But whatever may be thought of his judiciousness, or of the extent to which he carried his independence of thinking, and his dislike of philosophizing in religion, there can be but one opinion as to his ardent attachment to the doctrines which the Unitarianism of his day impugned. At the very outbreak of the heresy in 1718, and during the succeeding years of its attracting considerable notice, he appeared, both as a preacher and as a writer, in the van of its opponents, and was regarded by the subscribing part of the orthodox as a leader in their cause. Several Arians took advantage of the facility of non-subscription, to conceal their real sentiments, and to move unsuspected or at least unexposed among those of the orthodox who did not subscribe; and they possessed sufficient influence—aided by the unnecessary alarm of the non-subscribing orthodox for the rights of spiritual liberty, and the danger of human authority in religion—to raise a noisy outcry against the testing of sincerity, and the pledging of orthodoxy, by subscription. Mr. Ridgeley, finding the subscribing party with whom he acted violently assailed, publicly, assumed the championship of their cause, and defended their conduct from the press. In 1719, he published a tractate entitled "The unreasonableness of the charge of imposition exhibited against several dissenting ministers, in and about London, considered; and the difference between creed-making as practised in former ages, and their late conduct in declaring their faith in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, stated and argued;"—and, in 1721, he published "An Essay concerning Truth and Charity, in two parts; containing, first, an inquiry concerning fundamental articles of faith, and the necessity of adhering to them in order to church-communion; and, secondly, some historical remarks on the behaviour of the Jews and primitive Christians, toward those who had either departed from the faith, or by any other means rendered themselves liable to excommunication; showing, also, what is that uncharitableness which discovers itself in the conduct of men towards one another." He, as a matter of course, encountered much obloquy, and even received ill-will; which, no doubt,—among the presumptuous of his opponents who writhed under defeat, or among the feeble who could not attempt even a plausible defence,—were proportioned to the decisiveness of his success. What he strove for in the by-play of the controversy, was not the cause of subscription to a creed in any such view or use of the practice as is current in the Established churches, but essentially the unmasking of Arians, and the vindication, from the charge of uncharitableness, of men who made a resolute stand against the wily aggressions of the Arian heresy. He must have been grieved that the orthodox were divided in opinion, as to the proper manner in which Arianism should be detected and repelled; and both because the mass of the non-subscribers were

as affectionately zealous for the truth as himself, and because he enjoyed a spirituality of temper which mellowed every thing controversial which he produced, he wrote on the question of subscription with a mildness and a glow of charity rarely exhibited in the unceremonious literature of his age. As a controversialist, indeed, he was gentle almost to a fault. When vanquishing and utterly spoiling an opponent, he appears as if shedding tears over his sad plight before he can take courage to carry away a trophy; and when meeting a doubtful foe, he usually gives him the benefit of every explanation which can be made favourably to his cause, and even at times directs him to a retreat which, if discovered and run to by himself, would be esteemed a mere subterfuge. His singular generosity, however, is displayed only on questions of comparatively minor importance, and does not interfere with a sturdy stanchness, which equally distinguishes his character, in stating and defending, in the face of all consequences, and down to the smallest detail, the great doctrines of revealed truth.

In 1731 appeared the first edition of Mr. Ridgeley's great work—that in connexion with which chiefly his name lives in history, and whose influence, as an instrument for good, will probably render him celebrated and useful for generations to come—his *Body of Divinity*. Whether this valuable production is in substance what he prepared for the instruction of his students when he was appointed to the professorship of theology, or whether it is the fruit of matured thinking, and of frequent emendation, suppression, and enlargement during the period of his filling the professorial office, is not known. For many reasons, however, especially on account of the exquisite symmetry and theological finish of the work, the latter is the more likely to be the fact. The *Notes*, a few of which are elaborate, while almost all are excellent, and add much to the value of the text, bear very decided marks of having been written after he resolved to publish. Many portions of the staminal part of the work, too, are so nicely judicious, so ripe in thought, so mellow and odoriferous in matured reflection, that if they were not written, or at least revised, many years after he became a professor, he must have been, at an earlier age than is common with even great men, an accomplished scholar and a profound divine. On the supposition that he wrote his great work, and placed it in its permanent condition, immediately after his professorial appointment, what a grievous pity that he did not afterwards write some other work which might have bequeathed to posterity the rich accumulations of his subsequent experience and study! In that case, he must be ranked with many a brilliant but over-sensitive and over-modest mind which has lit up but one taper to shed light on generations, when it might have poured over them an illuminating stream from a cluster of burners. His *Body of Divinity* was published in two volumes folio, containing a likeness of the author, a preface explaining his plan and apologizing for his departure from the beaten but thorny track of scholasticism, and a long list of respectable subscribers, who encouraged him in his undertaking, and expressed their confidence in his eminent abilities, by pledging themselves to purchase copies. Flattering testimonies of approbation, immediately after the appearance of the work, were poured in upon him from all parts of England, and even from some places in Scotland. The University of Aberdeen, in particular, attested their appreciation of his worth, and of the service he had done to the religious public, by conferring upon him the highest literary honour they could bestow,—the degree of Doctor in Divinity. The first edition of his work having been rapidly sold, and encouragements of the most cheering kind having been given him to regard it as an instrument of good to many, he was induced to undertake a second edition—which, however, did not appear till the year of his death, three years after the publication of the first. In 1770, the work was, in a third edition, compressed into one volume folio, and



published in Scotland. Since that period, it has appeared in the dress of four octavos; but has, for many years, been scarce, and—except among the happy few who refuse to lay an antiquated but most instructive author on the shelf, in order to keep pace with the rapidly accumulating literature of our book-making age—comparatively neglected. A taste, however, for the racy and substantial theological writings of the days of Britain's moral giants has of late revived; and it will scarcely fail to adopt, as one of the richest dishes of its multifarious banquet for the intellect and the soul, Dr. Ridgeley's *Body of Divinity*.

As to the known facts of Dr. Ridgeley's history, few, exceedingly few, things remain to be told. Either he must have been a man of extremely retired habits—shrinking from the broad gaze of society, and clinging tenaciously to his desk and his post of prayer—or he must, as to the commemorating of his excellencies, have fallen between the stools of two friends who relied each on the other for doing him justice with posterity, and who one or both did not live to perform the wish of their heart. But the memory of the just is blessed. Though Dr. Ridgeley, notwithstanding all his eminence, does not figure in any lengthened biography, and fails—possibly through no fault of his own—to attract men by the storied picture of his excellencies, and instruct them by the recorded lessons of his example, he doubtless is 'had in everlasting remembrance,' and 'shines as the brightness of the firmament' in heaven, and even on earth appears far more accurately portrayed and monumented in his writings, than he could ever have been by the united labours of the artist and the biographer. The mind, the thoughts, the workings of the heart and the conceptions of the soul, and not the outward circumstances, the vicissitudes in place and health, in relationships and temporal successes, evince *the man*; and these, as to any person who has written under the solemn influence of attempting to convey or elucidate Divine instruction to his fellow-creatures, appear with incomparably more animation and fulness in his publications, than in the best story which even an impartial friend could narrate of his actions. Dr. Ridgeley appears to have deeply relished Divine truth for the sake of its own enjoyments,—its hallowing impressions on the soul, and its consoling power upon the heart; yet he possessed little of the ardour and impassioned unctuousness which so generally distinguished the nonconformist writers of former days, but was characterized rather by habits of calm, contemplative, intellectual meditation. He was strong in judgment, strong in purpose, and, probably, strong in the faith and the activities of Christian life, but feeble in what the phrenologists term "ideality." Though very far from being destitute of feeling, he seems, as a writer at least, to have, in general, been able so to keep down the sensibilities of his nature as to let them mingle in a much less proportion than is common among authors of his class with the effusions of his intellect. His writings, of course, derived, as to their didactic and controversial qualities, no small advantage from the coolness combined with the energy of his mind. Two eminent features stamped upon them are comprehensiveness and moderation. He was never so carried away by any impulse into the excessive pursuit of one prominent idea as to neglect the due exhibition of the thoughts with which it was naturally allied, or so excited in encountering an opponent, or disposing of a difficulty, as to lose sight, in any degree, of the systematic and illustrative parts of his subject; nor was he tempted, by respect for prevailing custom, to push any doctrine beyond the limits visibly impressed on it in the Divine word,—or, by attachment to a party or a theological school, to dress out a tenet in language studiously or unnecessarily repulsive to its opponents,—or, by fondness for victory, to say more against the arguments of an errorist than was simply requisite to extract their sting and vindicate the truth. His entire dealing with opponents, in fact, usually displayed a com-



bination, rarely witnessed in such attractiveness among controversial writers, of courteous respect for their persons, and firm yet mild opposition to their errors. He was a man of extensive erudition, patient in his inquiries, and careful to examine a question in all its phases; and he hence felt pity rather than petulance for men of mistaken views, aware of the false media through which they gazed,—and was at once uncompromising and moderate in propounding disputed truth, experiencing the force of the wide range of evidence in its favour, and, at the same time, averse to expose it to the cavils of the prejudiced and ignorant. Altogether, he was a man well-qualified for the solemnly responsible labours which occupied the greater part of his public life, and will probably, in his *Body of Divinity*, continue to be read with undiminished interest when the more rhetorical writers of a later period shall have been forgotten. “The nominal, as well as intrinsic, value of Dr. Ridgeley’s work,” says the excellent author of the *History of the Dissenting Churches*, “is far from being depreciated by the injuries of time. His method of reasoning he has adapted to the capacities of those who are unacquainted with the abstruse terms made use of by metaphysicians and schoolmen, and when introduced into subjects of theology, have a tendency rather to perplex than to improve the mind. His scheme of divinity is evidently Calvinistic; but, then, he has explained his subjects with so much moderation and latitude, as to obviate many of the objections raised against the system of doctrines that passes under that name. Upon the whole, it is probable that the English language does not furnish a work of this nature that, for perspicuity of language, extent of research, accuracy of judgment, and judicious description of the numerous subjects that fall under examination, any way equals this work of Dr. Ridgeley.” “The character of Dr. Ridgeley, and his ability for the different stations assigned him by providence, were highly appreciated by his contemporaries, and may be gathered partly from his writings. He was a man of extensive and sound learning, of remarkable diligence, and a strict economist of his time. His skilful knowledge of the learned languages, large acquaintance with ancient and modern writers, and critical knowledge of the sacred writings, rendered him well qualified for theological controversy; and he was accounted one of the most considerable divines of his age.”\*

Dr. Ridgeley died on the 27th of March, 1734, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. He continued till the end of his life to fill the pastoral office at the Three Cranes. His mortal remains were probably interred in the burying-ground at Bunhill. In addition to the works already mentioned, Dr. Ridgeley published “A Sermon on the death of Mr. Thomas Tongey, preached at Fetter-lane, November 9th, 1729;” “A Funeral Sermon for the Rev. John Hurron, who died December 31st, 1731;” and “A Sermon on the death of the Rev. John Sladen, preached at Horsley-down, October 28th, 1733.”

\* The *History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting-houses in London, Westminster, and Southwark, including the Lives of their Ministers from the Rise of Nonconformity to the present Time*, by Walter Wilson of the Inner Temple. London: 1808. Four Vols. 8vo. Vol. II. pp. 75—78. To this work—after making an almost fruitless search elsewhere for published materials, and entirely vain inquiries for manuscript or traditionary information,—we are mainly indebted for the facts of the present biographical sketch.



## THE

# DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

## EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

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### THE INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE we enter on our present undertaking, we shall premise a few things leading to the general subject of it. And that we may begin with what is most obvious, let it be considered,

1. That it is a duty incumbent on all who profess the Christian name, to be well acquainted with those great doctrines on which our faith, hope, and worship are founded; for, without the knowledge of these, we must necessarily be at a loss as to the way of salvation, which none has a right to prescribe but He who is its author.

2. This knowledge of divine truth must be derived from the holy scriptures; which are the only fountain of spiritual wisdom, whereby we are instructed in those things that could have been known in no other way but by divine revelation.

3. It will be of singular use for us not only to know the doctrines which are contained in scripture, but to observe their connection and dependence on one another, and to digest them into such a method that subsequent truths may give light to those which went before; or to lay them down in such a way that the whole scheme of religion may be comprised in a narrow compass, and, as it were, beheld with one view. This method will be a very great help to memory; and is what we call a system of divine truths, or a methodical collection of the chief articles of our religion, adapted to the capacity of those who need to be taught 'the first principles of the oracles of God.' When the design of this is to give the world a specimen of that 'form of sound words' which the church thinks itself obliged to 'hold fast,' and steadfastly to adhere to, we call it a confession of faith; and when digested into questions and answers, we call it a catechism. And though systems of divinity, confessions of faith, and catechisms are treated with contempt, instead of better arguments, by many who are no friends to the doctrines contained in them, and who appear to be partial in their resentment, inasmuch as they do not dislike those compositions which, by whatever name they are called, are agreeable to their own sentiments; yet we are bound to conclude that the labour, in what form soever it has been, of those who have been happy in the sense they have given of scripture, and in the method in which they have explained its doctrines, is a great blessing to us. At the same time, we are far from concluding that even the best composition is of equal authority with scripture, or that every word contained in it is infallible; nor do we regard it any further than as it is agreeable to, or sufficiently proved from, scripture.

4. Confessions of faith, and catechisms are not to be reckoned a novel invention, or not consonant to the scripture rule; since they are nothing else but a peculiar way of preaching or of instructing us in divine truths. And since scripture lays down no certain invariable rule concerning them, the same command which war-

rants preaching the word in any method, includes the explaining of it, as occasion serves, in a catechistical one. [See Note A below.]

5. As there are many excellent bodies of divinity printed in our own and foreign languages, and collections of sermons on the principal doctrines of religion, so there are various catechisms, or methodical summaries of divine truths, which, when consonant to scripture, are of great advantage to all Christians, whether elder or younger.

6. The catechisms composed by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, are esteemed as not inferior to any that are extant, either in our own or foreign languages, the doctrines therein contained being of the highest importance, and consonant to scripture. And the method in which they are laid down is so agreeable, that it may serve as a directory for ranging our ideas of the common heads of divinity in such an order that what occurs under each of them may be reduced to its proper place. [See Note B, p. 3.] It is the larger of them that we have attempted to explain and regulate our method by; because it contains several heads of divinity, not touched on in the shorter. And if, in any particular instance, we are obliged to recede from the common mode of speaking (though it is to be hoped, not from the common faith, once delivered to the saints), we submit our reasoning to the judgment of those who are disposed to pardon minor mistakes, and improve to the best purposes what comes with sufficient evidence.

[NOTE A. *The authority of creeds.*—The controversy respecting the lawfulness or scriptural propriety of confessions of faith, has been much affected by looseness of definition. Dr. Ridgely evidently contends that confessions are authoritative,—that ‘though not infallible in every word,’ they are, in some sense, a standard or test of the truth or falsehood of doctrines; and yet he speaks of them as ‘but a peculiar way of preaching, or of instructing us in divine truths,’ and as ‘designed to give the world a specimen of that form of sound words which the church thinks itself obliged to hold fast.’ Now most of the opponents of confessions admit the propriety of a declaration, oral or verbal, of the articles of an individual’s or a church’s belief. They maintain that every Christian community ought to be one in faith, and to possess confidence in one another’s soundness of religious views. Though they have no authorized and invariable symbols, all the details as well as the leading doctrines of which are declared to be of essential importance, they all possess some definite outline of principles, which they exhibit to the world ‘as a specimen’ of what they believe, and employ as a test of eligibility to their fellowship. The question respecting confessions of faith, therefore, is not, Are they lawful? but, Are they simply declarations of what a church’s belief is at the time when they are made? or are they criteria of what is true and what is false,—authoritative exhibitions of the sense of the divine word,—exact definitions of truth, to be received by all, and modified by none. Viewed in the former light, they may be of various length and expressed in various words, and they amount to nothing more than the aggregate of individual or private belief; but viewed in the latter light, they are expressed in fixed terms, and enacted and maintained by ecclesiastical or civil authority.

The earliest formal creed was framed, in the year 325, by the celebrated council of Nice. This was constructed with the view of condemning the doctrines and subtle devices of Arianism, and was occupied with minute, and, in some instances, unintelligible definitions of our Lord’s true deity. In the form in which it has descended to modern times, it was completed, in the year 381, by the first great council of Constantinople. At Nice, all those clauses of it were enacted which refer to Christ; and at Constantinople, that part of it was added which refers to the Holy Ghost. During the interval between its commencement and its completion, many formal creeds—all of which soon were lost, or fell into disuse—were enacted in favour respectively of orthodoxy, of Arianism, and of Semi-arianism, by the numerous councils which were convoked during the prevalence of the Arian controversy. Several celebrated creeds, especially those called the *Henoticon*, the *Ecthesis*, and the *Type*, were enacted, in the fifth and sixth centuries, by the Roman emperors: these were all designed to terminate prevailing controversies, and produce uniformity in faith; but they invariably created new disputes, and aggravated the evils which they were meant to remedy. A famous creed, usually known as the creed of Pope Pius IV., and containing a summary of the modern doctrines of Romanism, was drawn up after the close of the council of Trent, and enacted by Papal authority. Creeds, beautifully harmonizing with one another in doctrine, and very remarkable for their general orthodoxy, were framed by most of the Protestant churches immediately after the Reformation. These—amongst the latest of which, as well as the most esteemed, was the Westminster confession of faith—were enacted, and, for the most part, continue to be enforced, by the united authority of church and state; and though studiously constructed and professedly maintained with a view to the conservation of truth, they have, in our apprehension, been attended, throughout the greater part of Protestant Europe, with an influence the very reverse of that contemplated by their original framers. Some ecclesiastical bodies, indeed, either adopting creeds already framed, or constructing new ones of their own, maintain them only by the authority of church-courts, and regard them as subject to modification and amendment; but even these allow no further scope to the assertion of private judgment, than liberty, on the part of any minister or congregation, to solicit that the creeds may be reviewed.



Except as verbal statements of private belief, expressed in words and extending to a length entirely optional, creeds were unknown among the primitive Christians. What is usually termed the Apostles' creed, was of slow and gradual formation; it did not assume a fixed form till about the middle of the fourth century; and, in all its parts, it is merely a harmony of the verbal professions of faith which were made by the early disciples on occasion of their being admitted to church-fellowship. The apostles and their coadjutors appear to have required from converts little more than a profession of belief that 'Jesus Christ is the Son of God,'—Acts viii. 37. The early churches, wherever Judaism and heathen idolatry were the only systems which opposed the truth, demanded an acknowledgment of simply the unity of God and the Messiahship and divinity of Jesus; and when they had to conflict with Cerinthianism, Basilidianism, Valentinianism, Sabellianism, or other heresies, they expected such statements as should repudiate the various forms of novel or prevailing error. Either through prevailing custom, or by request of the churches, the converts used great brevity of expression. Any thousand of them, though perfectly at liberty to employ what words they pleased, could hardly have failed to utter similar expressions, and arrange their ideas in similar order. When renouncing Judaism, they might all say, 'We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;' and when renouncing Gnosticism, they might all say, 'We believe that he was born of the Virgin Mary.' A fixed verbal creed, strongly resembling that called the Apostles', might thus have been framed by a sort of concurrent usage or general consent; and even had it existed at a comparatively early period, would have been no disproof that primitive confessions of faith were all optional and spontaneous. The immediate materials out of which the Apostles' creed was formed, were ten transcripts or reports of the consentaneous professions of the converts and the churches. Now the expressions employed, the arrangement of the clauses, the copiousness of statement, and the prominence given to respective doctrines, are all more various than might possibly have been expected. One of the ten transcripts is given by Ignatius, who wrote about the year 105; two by Irenæus, about the year 184; three by Tertullian, about the year 200; two by Origen, about the year 230; one by Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea, about the year 250; and one by Cyprian, about the year 252. As the errors protested against were both more numerous and more subtle in the middle of the third century than in the days of Ignatius or of Irenæus, we might have expected the later creeds to be all more copious than the earlier; yet that of Gregory is shorter than any of four of the eight earlier, and the latest, or that of Cyprian, is the shortest of the ten, and only one-eighth of the length of the first of Irenæus. Though remarkable, too, for their doctrinal agreement, and though all existing in a harmony in the Apostles' creed, they are surprisingly various in their phraseology and in their omissions or expansions of articles. The church's public profession of faith—either 'as a specimen of what she held fast,' or as a test of fitness for admission to her fellowship—continued, till the civil establishing of Christianity, to be as strictly 'unauthorized,' and was as unfixed in the number of its articles, and allowed as free an option in the selection of words, as during the personal ministry of the apostles.

This glance at the history of creeds may afford instruction as to the light in which they ought to be regarded, and will evince the necessity of defining accurately in what sense they are advocated or opposed. If considered as optional expressions of private belief, they will be regarded by almost all Christians as 'but a peculiar way of preaching or of instructing us in divine truths;' if considered as fixed formule, from the dicta of which private judgment has no redress but by successful petition to an ecclesiastical judicatory, they will probably be rejected by all who 'call no man on earth master,' and who breathe the spirit of the noble Bereans; and if considered as standards of national orthodoxy, enacted by civil authority and maintained under the sanction of the civil power, they will be condemned by all who view the kingdom of Christ as spiritual, and the interference of the civil magistrate with religious matters as antichristian and corrupting.—ED.]

[NOTE B. *The Assembly's catechisms*.—The catechisms of the Westminster divines, 'are certainly,' as Dr. Ridgeley remarks, 'not inferior to any that are extant, either in our own or foreign languages.' They contain luminous digests of 'doctrines of the highest importance; they are admirably constructed as to methodical arrangement; and they constitute altogether a fine specimen of theological skill and prowess. But excellent as they are, they must not be pronounced faultless. They were framed amid the bustle of political contention, by men who had not entirely emerged from the mist of the scholastic theology; and are marked with blemishes which indicate the absence of matured reflection, and the influence of prejudices derived from the dark ages. They are occasionally redundant or defective,—inaccurate in statement or censurable in phraseology. For example, they nowhere so state the important doctrine of regeneration as to bring it fairly before the mind of a reader; and, at the same time, they hint it both under the question of 'effectual calling,' and under that of 'repentance.' Again, they identify 'the work of creation' with 'the space of six days,'—excluding both the pristine creation of chaos, and the constant creation of human souls; and they speak of the benefits of redemption as 'purchased,'—overlooking both the spontaneity or unpurchaseableness of the divine mercy, and the uniform scriptural assertion that what Christ purchased was 'his church,' 'his people,' the souls and bodies of the saved. Such blemishes as these, indeed, when compared with the excellencies which surround them, are but like the spots on the disc of the sun; but they mark the catechisms as human and fallible compositions, and ought to moderate the unqualified and blindfold admiration in which they are extensively held. Persons who have been used to follow wherever ecclesiastical standards lead, would do well, even when the beautiful and generally accurate catechisms of Westminster are before them, to listen to the heavenly oracle: 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'—ED.]

## THE GLORIFYING AND THE ENJOYING OF GOD.

QUESTION I. *What is the chief and highest end of man?*

ANSWER. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy him for ever.

*Man's chief End.*

It is supposed, in this answer, that every intelligent creature, acting as such, designs some end, which excites endeavours to attain it. The ends for which we act, if warrantable, may be considered as to their degree of excellency, and, in proportion to this, are to be pursued by proper means conducing to the attainment of them. There is one end that may be termed the chief and highest, as having an excellency above all others, and a supreme tendency to make us blessed: this is composed of two parts, and consists, as is observed in this answer, in the glorifying and the eternal enjoying of God, the fountain of blessedness. If it be inquired with what propriety both these may be called chief and highest, the answer is obvious and easy: The former, or the glorifying of God, is absolutely the chief and highest end; for nothing more excellent or desirable than it can be conceived; while the latter, or the enjoying of God, is the highest or best in its kind, and is, at the same time, a means leading to the other. And both these ends, which, with this distinction, we call chief and highest, are to be particularly considered by us, together with the connection that there is between them.

*The glorifying of God.*

I. We are to consider what it is to glorify God.

In order to our understanding this, let it be premised, 1. That there is a great difference between God's glorifying himself and our glorifying him. He glorifies himself, when he demonstrates or shows forth his glory; we glorify him by ascribing to him the glory that is his due,—even as the sun discovers its brightness by its rays, and the eye beholds it. God glorifies himself by furnishing us with matter for praise; we glorify him when we offer praise, or give unto him the glory due to his name. 2. Creatures are said to glorify God in various ways. Some things do it only objectively; as by them, angels and men are led to glorify him. Thus, 'the heavens declare his glory.'<sup>a</sup> The same might be said of all other inanimate creatures which glorify God, by answering the end of their creation, though they know it not. Intelligent creatures, on the other hand, and particularly men, are said to glorify God actively. This they do by admiring and adoring his divine perfections. These, as incomprehensible, are the object of admiration; and as divine, are the object of adoration. The apostle, accordingly, admires the divine wisdom: 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!'<sup>b</sup> God is to be admired in all the displays of his relative or manifestative glory; and 'his work, which men behold,' is to be 'magnified.'<sup>c</sup> He is to be adored more especially for his essential perfections.

We are to glorify God, by recommending, proclaiming, and setting forth his excellency to others. What we have the highest value for, we desire to see regarded by others in the same way as by ourselves. Thus, as is narrated by the evangelist, when the disciples received their first conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, they communicated it to others,—as Andrew to Peter, and Philip to Nathanael;<sup>d</sup> and when the woman of Samaria received the same conviction, she endeavoured to persuade all her neighbours to believe in Christ, as she did.<sup>e</sup> Thus we glorify God by making mention of his name with reverence, proclaiming his goodness with thankfulness, and inviting others, as the Psalmist does, to 'taste and see that he is good.'<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Psal. xix. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. xi. 33.

<sup>c</sup> Job xxxvi. 24.

<sup>d</sup> John i. 41, 45.

<sup>e</sup> John iv. 23, 29.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. xxxiv. 8.



But since this is a very comprehensive duty, including in it the whole of practical religion, it may be considered under the following particulars.

1. We glorify God by confessing all the sins we have committed, and taking shame to ourselves on account of them. This is interpretatively to acknowledge the holiness of his nature, and of his law, which the apostle asserts to be 'holy, just, and good.'<sup>s</sup> Thus Joshua advises Achan 'to give glory to God, by making confession to him';<sup>h</sup> and thus the penitent thief, who was crucified with our Saviour, glorified God, by confessing that he received the 'due reward of his deeds.'<sup>i</sup> So did the Levites, in their prayer recorded by Nehemiah, when they said to God, 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.'<sup>k</sup>

2. By loving and delighting in him above all things. This is to act as those who own the transcendent amiableness of his perfection, as the object of their highest esteem. Thus the Psalmist says, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none,' or nothing, 'upon earth, that I desire besides thee!'<sup>l</sup>

3. By believing and trusting in him,—committing all our concerns, both in life and in death, for time and for eternity, into his hands. Thus Abraham is said to have been 'strong in faith, giving glory to God';<sup>m</sup> and the apostle Paul, to have 'committed his all to him.'<sup>n</sup>

4. By a fervent zeal for his honour;—and that either for the honour of his truth and gospel, when denied, disbelieved, or perverted; or for the honour of his holiness, or of any of his other perfections, when reflected on or reproached, by the tongues or the actions of those who set themselves against him.

5. By improving our talents, and bringing forth fruit in proportion to the means we enjoy. 'Herein,' says our Saviour, 'is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.'<sup>o</sup>

6. By walking humbly, thankfully, and cheerfully before God. Humility acknowledges that infinite distance which is between him and us; retains a due sense of our own unworthiness of all we have or hope for; and owns every thing we receive to be the gift of grace: 'By the grace of God,' says the apostle, 'I am what I am.'<sup>p</sup> Thankfulness gives him the glory, as the author of every mercy; and accordingly sets a due value on it, in that respect. And to walk cheerfully before him is to show that we do not repent having engaged in his service, and to recommend it as most agreeable: this is what the Psalmist intends, when he says, 'Serve the Lord with gladness.'<sup>q</sup>

7. By heavenly-mindedness, or cherishing a desire to be with him, to behold his glory.

In the ways which have been specified, we glorify God by yielding obedience to his commanding will; and we must, in all of them, do this in the name of Christ, our great Mediator, and by strength derived from him. But we must further glorify God,

8. By yielding an entire submission to his disposing will. In particular, we must, when under afflictive dispensations of providence, own that he has a sovereign right to 'do what he will with us, as his own,'<sup>r</sup> and that these afflictions are infinitely 'less than our iniquities deserve.'<sup>s</sup> And we must adore his wisdom and goodness in trying our graces by them, and dealing with us in such a way as is 'needful,' and that only 'for a season.'<sup>t</sup> And we are to own his goodness in suiting our strength to our burdens, and overruling all events for our spiritual advantage. Submission consists also in an easy, patient, and contented frame of spirit, without the least murmuring or repining, concluding that whatever he does is 'well done';<sup>u</sup> and, which is something more, in rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer the loss of all things, yea, even of life itself, if called to do so, for his sake;—of which we have various instances in scripture.<sup>x</sup>

Moreover, we ought to glorify God in the natural, civil, and religious actions of life, all of which are to be consecrated or devoted to him. We enjoy the blessings

g Rom. vii. 12.  
l Ps. lxxiii. 25.  
p 1 Cor. xv. 10.  
t 1 Pet. i. 6.

h Josh. vii. 19.  
m Rom. iv. 20.  
q Ps. c. 2.  
u Ps. cxix. 65.

i Luke xxiii. 40, 41.  
n 2 Tim. i. 12.  
r Matt. xx. 15.  
x Acts v. 41; Heb. x. 34; Acts xx. 24.

k Neh. ix. 33.  
o John xv. 8.  
s Ezra ix. 13.

of life to no purpose, if we do not live to the Lord, and thankfully acknowledge that we receive them all from his hand. And whatever the calling be wherewith we are called, we must therein abide with him, and see that we have his warrant to engage in it; and we must expect success from his blessing upon it, else our exertions in it will be to no purpose. Thus says Moses, 'It is the Lord thy God that giveth thee power to get wealth.'<sup>y</sup> And, in all our dealings with men, we are to consider ourselves as under the inspection of the all-seeing eye of God, to whom we are accountable for all we do; and should be induced hereby, to exercise ourselves always to keep 'consciences void of offence towards God and man.'

As for religious duties—wherein we have to do more immediately with God—we are to glorify him, by taking up a profession of religion in general, as being influenced by his authority, encouraged by his promised assistance, and approving ourselves to him as the searcher of hearts. We must take heed that we do not rest in an outward form or show of godliness, without the power thereof; or in having a name to live, without possessing a principle of spiritual life by which we may be enabled to perform living and spiritual actions corresponding to our profession. And all religious duties must be performed by faith; whereby we depend on Christ, our great Mediator, for both assistance and acceptance, and thus glorify him as the fountain of all grace, in whom alone both our persons and our services are accepted in the sight of God, and become subservient to his glory. We must act thus at all times; so that though our thoughts may not be directly conversant about any of the divine perfections—as often happens when we are engaged in some of the more minute or indifferent actions of life—we may yet glorify him habitually, by having our hearts right with him, and whatever we do, may refer it ultimately to his glory. As every step the traveller takes is towards his journey's end, though this may not be every moment in his thoughts, so the less important actions of life should be subservient to those which are of greater consequence, and in which the honour of God and religion is most intimately concerned. In this manner we may be said to glorify him in all our conduct.

Having thus considered, that it is our indispensable duty to make the glory of God our highest end in all our actions, we might add, as a motive to enforce this duty, that God is the first cause of all things, and that his own glory was the end he designed in all his works, whether of creation or of providence. It is certain, that the glory of God is the most excellent end we can propose to ourselves; therefore the most valuable actions of life ought to be referred to it, and our hearts most set upon it. If otherwise, we act below the dignity of our nature; and, while other creatures, designed only to glorify him objectively, answer the end for which they were made, we, by denying him that tribute of praise which is due from us, abuse our superior faculties, and live in vain.

### *The enjoying of God.*

#### II. The next thing to be considered is what it is to enjoy God.

1. This supposes a propriety in him, or claim to him, as our God. We cannot be said to enjoy that which we have no right or claim to, as one man cannot be said to enjoy an estate which belongs to another. So God must be our God in covenant, or we cannot enjoy him;—and that he is so, with respect to all that fear him, is evident, inasmuch as he gives them leave to say, 'This God is our God,'<sup>z</sup> and, 'God, even our own God, shall bless us.'<sup>a</sup>

2. To enjoy God, is to have a special gracious communion with him, to converse or walk with him, and to delight in him, as when we can say, 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.'<sup>b</sup> 1. This enjoyment of God, or communion with him, is such as we are blessed with in the present world. This is but imperfect; as we know and love him but in part. Our communion with him here is often interrupted and weakened, through the prevalency of indwelling sin; and the joy and delight which arise from it are often clouded and sullied. And we enjoy him here in at best but a mediate way, in and under his ordinances, as

<sup>y</sup> Deut. viii. 18.

<sup>z</sup> Psal. xlviii. 14.

<sup>a</sup> Psal. lxxvii. 6.

<sup>b</sup> 1 John i. 3.



agreeable to the present state. 2. Believers shall enjoy him perfectly and immediately in heaven, without intermission or abatement, and that for ever. This is called 'seeing him as he is;'<sup>c</sup> and 'being with him where he is, to behold his glory.'<sup>d</sup> In order to fit them for it, their souls shall be made capable of receiving it, by the removal not only of all sinful but of all natural imperfections, and shall be more enlarged, as well as have brighter discoveries of the divine glory. They shall also have a perfect freedom not only from all temptations to sin, but from all the consequences of it—such as sorrow, divine desertion, [See Note C, page 8,] and the many evils that attend us in the present life. Thus their happiness shall be so confirmed and secured to them, that it shall be impossible for them to be dispossessed of it. This is certainly the most desirable end, next to the glory of God, that can be intended or pursued by us.

*The connection between the glorifying and the enjoying of God.*

III. This leads us to consider the connection that there is between our glorifying God and our enjoying him.

God has joined these two together, so that one shall not be attained without the other. It is the highest presumption to expect to be made happy with him for ever without living to his glory here; for inasmuch as heaven is a state of perfect blessedness, they who shall hereafter be possessed of it, must be trained up, or made meet for it, by a right use of all the means of grace. How preposterous would it be to suppose, that they who have no regard to the honour of God here, shall be crowned with glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, in his presence hereafter? A life of holiness is absolutely necessary to the heavenly blessedness. And since these two are so connected together, they who experience the one shall not fail of the other: for they have a security for both in the faithfulness of God, who has promised to 'give grace and glory.'<sup>e</sup> Therefore 'he who begins a good work in them, will perform it,'<sup>f</sup> and will give them 'the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.'<sup>g</sup>

From the connection that there is between our glorifying and our enjoying God, we may infer that it is a very preposterous thing for any one to assign as a mark of grace, that persons must be content to perish eternally, that God may be glorified. It is alleged indeed, in favour of this supposition, that Moses and the apostle Paul seem to give countenance to it; the one by saying, 'If thou wilt forgive their sin,—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written';<sup>h</sup> the other, 'I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh.'<sup>i</sup> But Moses, in desiring to be blotted out of the book which God had written, must not be supposed to be willing to perish eternally for Israel's sake; he is content simply to be blotted out of the book of the living, or to have his name no more remembered on earth; he seems to decline the honour which God had offered him, when he said, 'Let me alone, that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation';<sup>k</sup> he desires not the advancement of his own family, if Israel must cease to be a people, to whom God had promised to be a God. As for the apostle Paul's wish, it is either, as some suppose, a rash and inconsiderate flight of zeal for God, and so not warrantable, though in some respects proceeding from a good principle; or rather, as I humbly conceive, he could wish himself accursed from Christ so far as is consistent with his love, or he is content to be under the eternal marks of God's displeasure, or deprived of the comfortable sensation of his love, or of many of those fruits and effects of it which the believer enjoys in this life. I cannot, in the least, think that he desires to be deprived of a real interest in the love of God, or on any condition whatever to be eternally separated from Christ. [See Note D, page 8.]

Since the eternal enjoyment of God is one great end which we ought to have in view, it is no sign of a mercenary spirit to have an eye to the heavenly glory that we may be enlivened to duty. 'Thou shalt guide me,' said Asaph, 'with thy counsel,

c 1 John iii. 2.

g 1 Pet. i. 9.

d John xvii. 24.

h Exod. xxxii. 32.

e Psal. lxxxvi. 11.

i Rom. ix. 3.

f Phil. i. 6.

k Exod. xxxii. 10

and afterward receive me to glory.'<sup>1</sup> Promises occur in many scriptures, which are designed to excite our desire and hope of heavenly blessedness; therefore the exercise of Christian graces, from these motives, is far from being unlawful,—yea, it is commended in the saints, who are said to 'desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.'<sup>m</sup> And Moses is commended for having 'the recompense of reward' in view, when he preferred the 'reproach of Christ' before the 'treasures of Egypt.'<sup>n</sup> When however this respect to future blessedness is warrantable, it must be considered as an incitement to our glorifying God, by means of our beholding his glory; and when we consider it as a reward, we must not look upon it as what is merited by our service, or conferred in a way of debt, but as a reward of grace, given freely to us, though founded on the merits of Christ.

1 Psalm lxxiii. 24.

m Heb. xi. 16.

n Ver. 26.

[NOTE C. *Divine desertion*.—Dr. Ridgeley evidently regards 'divine desertion' as an evil incident, in the present life, to believers; and he is joined in this opinion by many eminent theological writers. But is he correct? Does God ever desert, even for the shortest period, any of his believing people? Does he ever 'hide his face,' or 'withdraw the light of his countenance,' from those who have been saved by grace, and are 'one spirit with the Lord?' At various times, indeed, and especially at the period of the captivity, he forsook his ancient people as their political protector, and hid his face from them as the Shechinah (Isa. liv. 7, 8.); and he has also withdrawn, under the new dispensation, from communities who professed to be his worshippers, and from places where the light of his favour had long shone. But as the God of the everlasting and well-ordered covenant, as the Father and portion of the redeemed, as the guardian and provider of Christ's spiritual body, as God who has justified and who will also glorify, who has begun a good work and will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus, he emphatically says to every believer, 'I will never, never leave thee; I will not, no, I will not forsake thee,'—Heb. xiii. 5. The translation which I have given of this passage, is not only warranted but required by the emphatic repetition of negatives in the original: *Ου μη σε ανα, ουδ' ου μη σε εγκαταλιπω*. Though he chastises his people for their sins, and contends with them for their backslidings; yet he deals with them as with sons, and calls upon them to recognise the very sufferings which they endure as evidences of his gracious presence and his love,—Heb. xii. 6—10. Rev. iii. 19. However numerous their transgressions, or however severe his displeasure, he never ceases to bless them with his grace. 'If,' says he, 'they forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail,'—Ps. lxxxix. 30—33. Never, in connexion with the new covenant, was divine desertion endured, except by the Lord Jesus. He, indeed, when he bore our sins and suffered in our stead, had occasion to exclaim, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But he so fully underwent it,—so amply achieved the purposes of its infliction,—so satisfactorily paid the penalty which it involved, that it will never be repeated, and can never be endured by any of his redeemed. If they walk in darkness, it is not because the light of God's face ceases to shine upon them, but because they shut their eyes from beholding it. He is 'near to them that call upon him,' and 'walks and dwells in his people.' Not only are his presence with them and his favour abiding, but their very 'life is hid with Christ in God.'—Ed.]

[NOTE D. *Paul's wishing himself 'accursed from Christ'*.—Paul wrote under divine inspiration. How, then, could his words express 'a rash and inconsiderate flight of zeal for God?' Dr. Ridgeley does not seem quite to relish this view of his wish; yet he substitutes another which is scarcely less exceptionable. Paul said, 'Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.' How, then, could he 'be content to be deprived of the comfortable sensation of his love, or of many of those fruits and effects of it which the believer enjoys in the present life?' Could he have gone thus far, he was in the very frame of mind, and needed to take but another step, to be willing to undergo the miseries of perdition. To want a sense of the divine love, is to want the chief element of spiritual life, and the grand motive to Christian obedience; and to be willing to endure that want, would argue an indifference as to both the permanency of the divine favour, and the acceleration of personal holiness, which is utterly inconsistent with the Christian character.

Paul's wish is sufficiently obvious, if we translate his words thus: 'I could wish that myself were anathema, after the manner of Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.' The word 'anathema,' among both the Jews and the Greeks, denoted a person who was devoted to destruction for the public safety, or one who was cut off from society and subjected to an ignominious death for the removal of a calamity. When a pestilence broke out, or any public distress occurred, one of the lowest or most execrable of the people was selected by authority, pronounced a vile thing, and doomed to a violent death. Among Greeks, Romans, and Jews, every such person, as well as every one who, like Achan, deserved to be sacrificed for the public good, was called anathema. Now Paul was willing to be esteemed such—he was willing to be treated as a malefactor, condemned as a despicable being, and led forth to ignominious execution—'after the manner of Christ.' As 'anathema,' he could not be counted vile, or put to death, *forth from or away from* any one, but by some person or *after his example*. A few codices of the Greek text read 'by Christ;' but are not of sufficient number and authority to affect the received reading. The phrase *ανάσμα απο του Χριστου* may fairly be translated 'anathema after the manner of Christ.' Both *απο*



in Greek and 'from' in English, as well as the corresponding preposition in other languages, express as truly the relation of receiving impression, as that of receding or of being repelled. One object may be *from* another, in the sense of egression, a second in the sense of repulsion, a third in the sense of impression or imitation. To say, 'I wish I could paint *from* Titian,' is as correct as to say, 'I wish I were separated from my companions.' In the latter phrase, 'from' has the sense of 'forth from' or 'away from'; and in the former, it means 'after the manner of.' Now a person who was 'anathema' might be in imitation or according to the example of another; but he could be 'forth from' or 'away from' only the community, who repelled him from their society, and on whose account he was devoted to ignominy and death. Paul 'wished to be anathema after the manner of Christ.' He was willing, in imitation of his blessed Lord, to be counted a vile thing, and, for the sake of his brethren's good, set apart to ignominious sufferings and destruction. 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,'—1 John iii. 16. Christ, when professedly setting an example to his disciples, had said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' John xv. 13.; and now the apostle, taking up the lesson which his Master taught, and breathing the spirit which he exemplified, says, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were anathema after the manner of Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' 'Behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God,'—Acts xx. 22—24.—Ed.]

## THE BEING OF GOD.

### QUESTION II. *How doth it appear that there is a God?*

ANSWER. The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.

### *Why proofs of the being of God should be studied.*

BEFORE we enter on the proof of this important doctrine, let it be premised, that we ought to be able to prove by arguments, or give a reason of our belief, that there is a God. For,

1. This doctrine is the foundation of all natural and revealed religion. It, therefore, must not be received merely by tradition, as though there were no other reason for our believing it than that others do so, or that we have been instructed in it from our childhood. To receive it in this manner is unbecoming the dignity and importance of the subject, and would display great stupidity; especially as we have so full and demonstrative evidence in the whole frame of nature,—in which there is nothing but what affords an argument to confirm our belief that there is a God.

2. There is a great deal of atheism in our hearts; by reason of which we are prone sometimes to call in question the being, perfections, and providence of God. The devil also frequently injects atheistical thoughts into our minds; which are a great affliction to us, and render it necessary that we should use all possible means for our being established in this great truth.

3. The abounding of atheism in the world, and the boldness of many in advocating it, renders it necessary that we should be able to defend the doctrine of the divine existence, that we may stop the mouths of blasphemers, and so plead the cause of God, and assert his being and perfections against those that deny them.

4. A firm belief in God's existence will greatly tend to establish our faith in those comfortable truths that arise from our interest in him; and will give us a more solid foundation for our hope, as excited by his promises, which receive all their force and virtue from those perfections which are implied in the idea of a God. It will also make us set a due value on his works, in which we see a manifestation of his eternal power and Godhead, and are in consequence led to admire him. 'Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.'<sup>o</sup>

*Proofs of the being of God.*

We shall now consider those arguments, mentioned in this answer, by which the being of a God may be evinced; as,

1. The light of nature in man. By this we understand that reason which he is endowed with; whereby he is distinguished from, and rendered superior to, all other creatures in this lower world; and whereby he is able to observe the connection of things, and their dependence on one another, and to infer those consequences which may be deduced from thence. The reasoning powers of man, indeed, are very much sullied, depraved, and weakened, by our apostacy from God; but they are not wholly obliterated; for there are some remains of them, which are common to all nations,—whereby, without the help of special revelation, it may be known that there is a God. [See Note E, p. 20.] This respects either the principle of reasoning which we were born with, upon account of which infants are called intelligent creatures, or the exercise of it in a discursive way, in adults, who alone are capable to discern the truth of God's existence; and this they do more or less, in proportion to their natural capacity, as they make advances in the knowledge of other things.

Now for the proof of the being of a God from the light of nature, let the following propositions be considered in their respective order: 1. There hath been, for many ages past, a succession of creatures in the world. 2. These creatures could not make themselves; for that which is nothing cannot act. If it make itself, it acts before it exists; it acts as a creator before it exists as a creature: and it must be, in the same respect, both a cause and an effect, or it must be, and not be, at the same time,—than which nothing can be more absurd. 3. These creatures could not make one another; for to create something out of nothing, or out of matter altogether unfit to be made into what is produced out of it, is to act above the natural powers of the creature, and contrary to the fixed laws of nature. Creation, therefore, is too great a work for a creature, who can do nothing but in a natural way; just as an artificer, though he can build a house with fit materials, cannot make these materials out of nothing, or build the house with materials unfit for his purpose, as water, fire, air, &c. All creatures act within their own sphere, that is, in a natural way; but creation is a supernatural work, and too great for a creature to perform; therefore, creatures cannot be supposed to have made one another. 4. If it were supposed possible for one creature to make another, then superiors must have made inferiors; and so man, or some other intelligent creature, must have made the world. But where is the creature that ever pretended to such power or wisdom as to be called the 'Creator of the ends of the earth?' 5. If any creature could make himself or other creatures of the same species, why did he not preserve himself? for he that can give being to himself, can certainly continue himself in being;—or why did he not make himself more perfect? why did he make himself, and other creatures of the same species, in such a condition that they are always indigent, or stand in need of support from other creatures? Or further, supposing the creature made himself, and all other things, how comes it to pass that no one knows much of himself comparatively, or of other things? Does not he that makes things understand them? Man therefore could not make himself, or other creatures. It follows from hence, that there must be a God, who is the first cause of all things, necessarily existing, and not depending on the will of another, and by whose power all things exist. 'Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.'<sup>p</sup> 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.'<sup>q</sup> [See Note F, p. 23.]

Thus much concerning the more general method of reasoning, whereby the light of nature evinces the being of a God. We proceed to consider more particularly,

II. How the being of God may be proved from his works. The cause is known by its effects; since, therefore, as was but now observed, creatures could not produce themselves, they must have been created by one who is not a creature. Now if



there be no medium between God and the creature, or between infinite and finite, between a self-existent or underived and a derived being; and if all creatures exist, as has been shown, by the will and power of their Creator, and so are finite and dependent; then it follows, that there is one from whom they derived their being, and on whom they depend for all things,—and that is God. This is usually illustrated by a similitude: Suppose we were cast on an unknown island, and there saw houses built but no men to inhabit them, should we not conclude there had been some there that built them? Could the stones and timber put themselves into the form in which they are? Or could the beasts of the field, that are without understanding, build them? Or when we see a curious piece of workmanship, as a watch or a clock, perform all its motions in a regular way, can we think that the wheels came together by chance? or should we not conclude that it was made by one of sufficient skill to frame them and put them together in order, and give motion to them? ‘Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?’<sup>r</sup>

This leads us to consider the wisdom of God as apparent in his works, and as demonstrating his being. This the Psalmist mentions with admiration: ‘O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.’<sup>s</sup> When we see letters put together, which make words or sentences containing the greatest sense, and the ideas expressed by them joined together in the most beautiful order, should we not conclude that some man, equal to the work, had put them together? Even so the wisdom that shines forth in all the parts of the creation, proves that there is a God. This appears in the exact harmony and subserviency of one part of the creation to another. ‘I will hear, saith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.’<sup>t</sup> One part of this frame of nature ministers to another. Thus the sun and other heavenly bodies, give light to the world,—which would be no better than a cave or dungeon without them; and afford life and influence to plants and trees; and maintain the life of all living creatures. The clouds send down rain that moistens the earth, and makes it fruitful; and this is not perpetual, so as to destroy it; nor is it poured forth by whole oceans together, but by small drops. ‘He maketh small the drops of water; they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.’<sup>u</sup> The moist places of the earth, and the sea, supply the clouds with water, that they may have a sufficient store of rain. The air fans and refreshes the earth, and is necessary for the growth of all things, and for maintaining the life and health of the earth’s inhabitants. This subserviency of one thing to another is without their own design or contrivance,—for they are not endowed with understanding or will; neither doth it depend on the will of the creature. The sun doth not enlighten or give warmth to the world, or the clouds or air refresh the earth, at our pleasure; and therefore they are all subject to the order and direction of one who is the God of nature, who commands the sun, and it shineth, and the clouds to give rain at his pleasure. It is he who gave their regular motion to the heavenly bodies, and who, by his wisdom, fixed and continues the various seasons of the year, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, day and night, and every thing that tends to the beauty and harmony of nature. Hence these curious and never-enough-to-be-admired works, plainly declare that there is a God. This is described with unparalleled elegance of style: ‘Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north. By the breath of God, frost is given; and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth his bright cloud. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? how thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south-wind?’<sup>x</sup>

But that we may further evince the truth of the divine existence, we shall prove it by a series of arguments. And

I. The being of God appears from the constitution or condition of those creatures that are endowed with a lower kind of life than man.

1. No creature can produce a fly or even the smallest insect, but according to the

<sup>r</sup> Isa. xlv. 9.

<sup>s</sup> Psal. civ. 24.

<sup>t</sup> Hos. ii. 21, 22.

<sup>u</sup> Job xxxvi. 27.

<sup>x</sup> Job xxxvii. 9, &c.

fixed laws of nature ; and that which we call life, or the principle of their respective motion and actions, none but a God can give. His being, therefore, is plainly proved, from all living creatures below man, which are subservient, many of them, to one another, and all to man, and that not by our ordering, but by God's.

2. The natural instinct of living creatures by which every one acts according to its kind, and some of the smallest produce things that no human art can imitate, plainly proves the being of a God. Thus the bird, in building its nest ; the spider, in framing its web ; the bee, in providing store-houses for its honey ; the ant, in making those provisions which it lays up in summer against winter ; the silk-worm in providing clothing for man, and in being transformed into various shapes ; and many others of the smaller sort of creatures, in their various wonderful ways of acting without the exercise of reason or design,—all prove the being of God,

3. The greater, fiercer, or more formidable sort of living creatures, as the lion, the tiger, and other beasts of prey, are so constituted, that they flee from man, whom they could easily devour, and avoid those cities and places which men inhabit, that so we may dwell safely. They are not chased into the woods by us ; but these are allotted, as the places of their residence, by the God of nature.

4. Those living creatures that are most useful to man, and so subject to him, as the horse, the camel, and many others, know not their own strength or power, to resist or rebel against him. This is ordered by infinite wisdom. And there are many other instances of a like nature, all of which are very strong arguments to prove that there is a God, whose glory shines forth in all his works.

II. The being of God appears from the structure of human bodies, in regard to which we are said to be 'fearfully and wonderfully made ;' and which, if it be abstractly considered, without regard to the fixed course and laws of nature, exceeds the power and skill of all creatures, and can be no other than the workmanship of a God, and therefore is a demonstration of his being and perfections. No man ever pretended to give a specimen of his skill in constructing a human body. The finest statuarios or limners, who have given pictures or representations of human bodies, have not pretended to give life or motion to them ; in this their skill is baffled. The wisest men in the world have confessed their ignorance as to how human bodies are formed,—how they are framed in their first rudiments, preserved and grow to perfection in the womb,—and how they are increased, nourished, and continued in their health, strength, and vigour, for many years. The structure of the human frame has made the inquiries of the most thoughtful men issue in admiration ; and we may see plainly displayed in it the power and wisdom of God.

Here it may be observed, that there are several things very wonderful in the structure of human bodies, which farther evince this truth. As, 1. The organs of sense and speech. 2. The circulation of the blood, and the preservation of natural heat for many years together ; of which there is no instance but in living creatures. Even fire will consume and waste itself by degrees, and all things into which heat has only been diffused will soon grow cold ; but the natural heat of the body of man is preserved in it as long as life is continued. 3. The continual supply of animal spirits, and their subserviency to sense and motion. 4. The nerves ; which, though small as threads, and all tending to convey strength and motion to the body, remain unbroken. 5. The situation of the parts in their most proper place. The internal parts, which would be ruined and destroyed if exposed to the same injuries as the external ones, are secured in proper enclosures, and in consequence preserved. 'Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.'<sup>a</sup> 6. The disposal of the various parts of the body so as to be fitted for their respective uses ; all being situated in those places which are best adapted to the performance of their proper functions. 7. The diversity of features in human bodies ; which is so great that we can see scarcely two persons in all respects alike. It is wonderful, and is clearly the result of divine wisdom ; for even this is necessary for society, and for our performing the duties which we owe to one another. 8. The union of the body with the soul, which is of a very different nature. This



union can never be sufficiently admired or accounted for ; but gives us occasion to own a superior, infinitely wise being. This leads us to observe that,

III. The being of God appears from the nature of the soul of man. God is said to have 'formed the spirit of man within him.'<sup>b</sup> And hereby his power and wisdom, and consequently his being, are declared. For,

1. The nature of a spiritual substance is much less known than that of bodies ; and that which we cannot fully understand, we must admire. If the wisdom and power of God is visible in the structure of our bodies, it is much more so in the formation of our souls ; and since we cannot fully describe what they are, and know little of them but by their effects, certainly we could not form them ;—and therefore there is a God, who is 'the Father of spirits.'

2. The powers and capacities of the soul are various, and very extensive. The soul can frame ideas of things superior to its own nature, and can employ itself in contemplating and beholding the order, beauty, and connection of all those things in the world which are, as it were, a book, in which we may read the divine perfections, and improve them to the best purposes. It takes in the vast compass of things past, which it can reflect on and remember with satisfaction or regret ; and it can look forward to things to come, which it can anticipate with pleasure or uneasiness. It can choose or embrace what is good, or flee from and reject what is evil and hurtful. It is capable of moral government, of conducting itself according to the principles of reason, and according to rules enjoined it for the attaining of the highest end. It is capable of religion ; and in consequence can argue that there is a God, and give him the glory that is due to his name, and be happy in the enjoyment of him. It is immortal, and therefore cannot be destroyed by any creature ; for none but God has an absolute sovereignty over the spirits of men. 'No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death.'<sup>c</sup>

IV. The being of God appears from the nature and office of conscience ; which is that whereby the soul takes a view of itself, and its own actions, as good or evil, and considers itself as under a law to a superior being, from whom it expects rewards or punishments. This evidently proves that there is a God. For,

1. Conscience is often distressed or comforted by its reflection on those actions which no man on earth can know. Now when it fears punishment for those crimes which come not under the cognizance of human laws, its uneasiness and its dread of punishment, plainly discover that it is apprehensive of a divine being, who has been offended, whose wrath and resentment it fears. All the endeavours that men can use to bribe, blind, or stupify their consciences are unavailing. The sad apprehension of deserved punishment, from one whom they conceive to know all things, even the most secret crimes, makes persons uneasy, whether they will or not. Whithersoever they flee, or what amusement soever they betake themselves to, conscience will still follow them with its accusations and its dread of the divine wrath. 'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.'<sup>d</sup> 'A dreadful sound is in his ears ; in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.'<sup>e</sup> 'Terrors take hold of him as waters ; a tempest stealeth him away in the night ; the east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place ; for God shall cast upon him, and not spare ; he would fain flee out of his hand.'<sup>f</sup> 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth.'<sup>g</sup> And this is universal. There are none who are not, some time or other, liable to fears arising from self-reflection, and the dictates of conscience. The most advanced circumstances in the world will not fortify against them or deliver from them. 'As Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.'<sup>h</sup> Even Pharaoh himself, the most hard-hearted sinner in the world, who would gladly have forced a belief upon himself that there is no God, and boldly said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him ?' even he could not ward off the conviction which his own conscience suggested, that there is a God. Hence he was forced to say, 'I have sinned this time ; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.'<sup>i</sup> And

<sup>b</sup> Zech. xii. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Job xxvii. 20—22.

<sup>c</sup> Eccles. viii. 8.

<sup>g</sup> Prov. xxviii. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. lvii. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Acts xxiv. 25.

<sup>e</sup> Job xv. 21.

<sup>i</sup> Exod. ix. 27.

indeed all the pleasure that any can take in the world, who give themselves up to the most luxurious way of living, cannot prevent their trembling, when conscience suggests some things terrible to them for their sins. Thus respecting Belshazzar, when he had made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and when, in the midst of his jollity and drinking wine, he saw the finger of a man's hand upon the wall, it is said, 'The king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him; so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.'<sup>k</sup> Thus there are dictates of conscience, which make men very uneasy, and which force wicked men to own that there is a God, whether they will or not. But,

2. Good men have frequently such serenity of mind and peace of conscience, as affords them farther conviction that there is a God. This indeed is a privilege enjoyed by those who have the light of scripture-revelation, and so might have been considered under a following head; yet in connection with the argument which has been just stated, it may properly be introduced here as a proof of the being of a God. For, 1. This composure of mind abides under all the troubles and disappointments which good men meet with in the world. Those things which tend to disturb the peace of other men, do not so much affect them. 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.'<sup>l</sup> And as this peace abides under all the troubles of life; so it does not leave them, but is sometimes more abundant, when they draw nigh to death. 2. It is a regular and orderly peace, accompanied with grace; so that conscience is most quiet when the soul is most holy. This shows that there is a hand of God in working or speaking this peace; as designing thereby to encourage and own that grace which he has wrought in good men. Thus 'the God of hope' is said 'to fill us with all joy and peace in believing.'<sup>m</sup> 3. Though men labour ever so much after this peace, they can never attain it without a divine intimation, or God's speaking peace to their souls; and when he is pleased, for wise ends, to withdraw from them, they are destitute of it. God, therefore, is known by his works, or by those influences of his grace whereby he gives peace to the conscience.

V. The being of God appears from those vast and boundless desires which are implanted in the soul. These are such that it can take up its rest, and meet with full satisfaction, in nothing short of a being of infinite perfection. There must, therefore, be such a being; and he is God. This will further appear if we consider, that though the soul, at present, be entertained and meets with some satisfaction in creature-enjoyments, yet it still craves and desires more, of what kind soever they be; and the reason is, that they are not commensurate to its desires. 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing.'<sup>n</sup> 'That which is wanting cannot be numbered.'<sup>o</sup> Now we cannot rationally suppose that such boundless desires should be implanted in the soul, while there is nothing sufficient to satisfy them; for then the most excellent creature in this lower world would be, in some respects, more miserable than creatures of a lower order, which obtain their ultimate desire. The Psalmist, speaking of the brute creatures, says, 'They are filled with good';<sup>p</sup> that is, they have all that they crave. There must therefore be a being who is infinitely good, and who can satisfy, in their utmost extent, the boundless desires of the human soul; and that being is God, the fountain of all blessedness.

VI. The being of God appears from the consent of all nations. That which all mankind agree in, must be founded in the nature of man; and that which is founded in the nature of man, is evident from the light of nature. It is true, there are many who have, as the apostle says, thus 'known God, who have not worshipped and glorified him as God, but have been vain in their imaginations, and have changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.'<sup>q</sup> But it does not follow, that the heathen, who were guilty of idolatry, had no notion of a God in general. The apostle's words seem to teach that there is something in the nature of men which suggests that they ought to worship some divine being, and that they did service to those who were by nature

<sup>k</sup> Dan. v. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Eccles. i. 15.

<sup>l</sup> Psal. cxii. 7.

<sup>p</sup> Psal. civ. 28.

<sup>m</sup> Rom. xv. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Eccles. i. 8.

<sup>q</sup> Rom. i. 21, 25.



no Gods, because they could not, by the light of nature, sufficiently know the true Deity. This proves, however, that they were not wholly destitute of some ideas of a God; which, therefore, are common to all mankind. Accordingly, all ancient history sufficiently discovers that men, in all ages, have owned and worshipped something that they called a God, though they knew not the true God. The Heathens themselves, also, as may easily be understood from their own writings, reckoned atheism a detestable crime, because contrary to the light of nature; and some of them have asserted that there is no nation in the world so barbarous and void of reason, as to have no notion of a God. We may consider, likewise, that no changes in the world, or in the circumstances of men, no changes in the external modes of worship, or in those things which have been received by tradition, have, in any instance, erased or altered the conviction, that there is a God. The being of a God, therefore, may be proved by the consent of all nations.

It is objected to this reasoning, that there have been some speculative atheists in the world. History, it is said, gives us an account of such persons, and informs us also, that there are some whole countries in Africa and America where there is no worship, and, as appears to us, no notion of a God. Now, though history does furnish us with instances of persons who have been deemed atheists, yet their number has been very inconsiderable; so that it will not follow, that the idea of a God is not, some way or other, impressed upon the heart of man. Might it not as well be said, that, because some children are born idiots, reason is not natural to man, or universal? Besides, they who bear the character of atheists in ancient history, and such as, by their conversation, appear to be atheists in our day, are rather practical atheists than speculative. We do not deny, that, in all ages, many have asserted, and have pretended to prove, that there is no God; but it is plain that they discover, at times, such fear and distress of conscience, as is sufficient to disprove what they pretend to defend by argument. As to the alleged fact that there are, in some parts of the world, people so stupid as not to own or worship a God, this is hard to be proved; nor have any, who have asserted it, had such knowledge of their condition as to be able to determine what their sentiments about this matter are. But suppose the fact were true, nothing could be argued from it but that such nations are barbarous and brutish,—that though they have the principle of reason, they do not act like reasonable creatures. It is sufficient for our purpose to assert, that all men who act like reasonable creatures, or who argue from those principles of reason which they are born with, may conclude that there is a God. It is further objected by atheists that the notion of the being of a God, or indeed all religion, took its rise from human policy; that it was a device for restraining the world from those irregularities which were inconsistent with the well-being of civil government; and that it was readily received, and propagated by tradition, and so by an implicit faith transmitted from one generation to another among those who inquire not into the reason of what they believe, and was, at the same time, supported and enforced by the influence of fear. This, though much in the mouths of atheists, is a vile insinuation, without any shadow of reason, or show of proof; and indeed it may be easily disproved. For, 1. If the notion of a God, and religion consequent upon it, were a contrivance of human policy, it must have been either the invention of one man, or the result of the contrivance of many convened together to impose on the world. If it was the invention of one man, who was he? when and where did he live? what history gives any account of him? or when was the world without all knowledge of a deity, and some religion, that we may know, at least, in what age the contriver of it flourished? or could the contrivance of one man be so universally complied with, and yet none pretend to know who he was, or when he lived? And if it was the contrivance of a number of men, how could they possibly have acted together, without their proceedings being discovered? or how could the princes of the earth, who must have been at the head of the contrivance, have mutual intelligence, or be convened together? By whose authority did they meet? or what gave rise to their confederacy? It is morally impossible that such a piece of state policy should have been made use of to deceive the world, and universally prevailed, and yet none in any age ever discovered the imposture. Besides, the princes and great men of the world, who had

a hand in it, would certainly have exempted themselves from any obligation to own a God, or any form of worship, whereby they acknowledge him their superior ; for impostors generally design to beguile others, but to exempt themselves from what they bind them to. If any of the princes or great men of the world, had invented the opinion that there is a God, and that he is to be worshipped, their pride would have led them to persuade the world that they were gods themselves, and ought to be worshipped. They would never have included themselves in the obligation to own a subjection to God, if the notion of a God had, for political ends, been invented by them. How, too, if belief in the being of a God was invented by human policy, came it to be universally received by the world? It is certain that it was not propagated by persecution ; for though there has been persecution to enforce particular modes of worship, yet there never was any to enforce the belief of a God. If, then, this belief was not propagated by force, or spread through the world by fraud, what are those arts which are pretended to have been used to propagate it? It took its rise, say atheists, from human policy ; but the politicians are not known, nor the arts found out, which they used to persuade the world that there is a God. How unreasonable is the objection, or rather cavil, against a deity, that it was the result of human policy ! 2. The belief of a God was not propagated in the world merely by tradition, and so received by implicit faith. Notions that have been received with implicit faith by tradition, are not pretended to be proved by reason. But the belief of a God is founded on the highest reason, so that if no one in the world believed it besides myself, I am bound to believe it, or else must no longer lay claim to that reason which is natural to mankind, and should show myself rather a brute than a man. Schemes of religion, too, that were propagated merely by tradition, have, in no instance, been universally received. But the belief of a God has universally prevailed. Moreover, if this belief was spread by tradition, why was not the mode of worship settled, that so there might be but one religion in the world? The reason is, that the heathen received their respective modes of worship by tradition, which respects only particular nations, or a particular set of men ; whereas the belief of a God is rooted in the nature of man. Whatever, besides, has been received only by tradition, has not continued in the world in all the turns, changes, and overthrow of particular nations that received it. But the belief of a God has continued in the world throughout all ages and changes ; and therefore is founded not in tradition, but in the light of nature. 3. The belief of a God could not take its rise merely from fear of punishment, which men expected would be inflicted by him ; though that is a strong argument to establish us in it. Liability to punishment for crimes committed, supposes that there is a God, who is offended by sin, and from whom punishment is expected ; and as the effect cannot give being to the cause, so fear could not be the first ground and reason of the belief of a God. Moreover, the principal idea which men have of God, and that which is most natural to us, is that of an infinitely amiable object,—a being of infinite goodness : ‘ God is love ;’<sup>r</sup> and we conceive of him as the spring of all we enjoy and hope for. But as for fear, that is only what arises in the breasts of wicked men, and is founded in the secondary ideas we have of him,—namely, as being offended, and as taking vengeance. Now they only who offend him are afraid of his vengeance ; and the sentiments of the worst of men are not to be our rule in judging concerning the being of a God. If these believe that there is a God, only because they fear him, others believe him to be the fountain of all blessedness, and as such they love him. Therefore, the ideas that men have of the being of a God did not take their rise from fear.

VII. The being of God appears from the works of providence. Providence is that which governs the world, preserves it from returning to its original nothing, and supplies all creatures with those things that their respective natures or necessities require. Creatures could no more provide for themselves than they could make themselves ; and he that provides all things for them is God. All finite beings have their respective wants, whether they are aware of them or not ; and he must



be all-sufficient or divine who can fill or supply the necessities of all things. Thus the Psalmist speaks of God as supplying the necessities of 'beasts and creeping things;' who are said to 'wait upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season.'<sup>s</sup> But more particularly,

1. The being of God appears from the extraordinary dispensations of providence when things happen contrary to the common course and fixed laws of nature, as when miracles have been wrought. These are undeniable proofs of the being of a God; for when they are performed, a check or stop is put to the course of nature, and its fixed order or laws are controlled or inverted,—and this none but he who is the God and Author of nature can do. To deny that miracles have been wrought, is little better than scepticism; since the reality of them hath been proved by the most unquestionable testimony, contained not only in scripture but in other writings, and is confessed even by those who deny the principal things designed to be confirmed by them. It is true, they were never wrought with an immediate design to prove that there is a God, since that is sufficiently demonstrated without them; but inasmuch as they have been wrought with other views, the being of a God, whose immediate power has been exerted in them, appears beyond all contradiction.

2. The being of God appears also from the common dispensations of providence, which we daily behold and experience. These we call common, because they contain nothing miraculous, or contrary to the laws of nature. They are nevertheless wonderful, and have in them the traces and footsteps of infinite wisdom and sovereignty, and therefore prove that there is a God. For it cannot otherwise be accounted for, that so many things which are altogether unlooked for, should befall us or others in the world. Thus one is cast down, and a blast thrown on all his endeavours; and another is raised beyond his expectation. 'Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.'<sup>t</sup> The wisest and best concerted schemes of men are often baffled, and brought to nought, by some unexpected occurrence of providence; and this also argues a divine control. Thus God says, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.'<sup>u</sup> And who is it that can turn the counsels of men into foolishness, but an infinitely wise God?

3. The being of God appears from his providing for the necessities of all living. There is a natural instinct, in all creatures, to take care of and provide for their young, before these are capable of providing for themselves. This is observable not only in mankind, as the prophet says, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child?'<sup>v</sup> but also in the lower sort of creatures. Even those which are naturally most fierce and savage, provide for their young with extraordinary diligence; and they sometimes neglect and almost starve themselves to provide for them, and endanger their own lives to defend them. They bring forth their young at the most convenient season of the year,—when the springing grass begins to supply them with food,—when the fowls of the air may get a livelihood by picking up the seed that is sown, and not covered by the earth,—and when the trees begin to put forth their fruits to supply and feed them. A large class of them are provided, too, with the breast, the paps, the udder, replenished with milk; and there is a natural instinct in their young, to desire their appropriate nourishment. Many of the beasts of the field are furnished also with weapons for their defence; others have a natural swiftness to escape from danger; and the feeble have provided for them holes and caverns in the earth to secure them from pursuit. Now these provisions cannot be the effect of mere chance, but are all evident proofs of the being of a God.

Providence is, in a peculiar manner, concerned for the supply of man, the noblest of all creatures in the world. 'He giveth food to all flesh.'<sup>y</sup> 'Thou preservest man and beast.'<sup>z</sup> The earth is stored with variety of food. And though the poor, or greater part of mankind, cannot purchase those far-fetched or costly dainties which are the support of luxury, they may, by their industry, provide that food with which the earth is plentifully stored, and which maintains life and health as well as the

<sup>s</sup> Psal. civ. 25, 27; Psal. cxlv. 15, 16.

<sup>t</sup> Psal. lxxv. 6, 7.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. i. 19.

<sup>x</sup> Isa. xlix. 15.

<sup>y</sup> Psal. cxxxvi. 25.

<sup>z</sup> Psal. xxxvi. 6.



luxuries of the rich, who fare deliciously every day; and if their families increase, and a greater number is to be provided for, they generally have a supply in proportion to their increasing number. Providence also has stored the earth with various medicines, and given skill to men to use them as a relief against the many sicknesses that we are exposed to. All these things, and innumerable other instances that might be given, argue the care and bounty, and consequently prove the being of God, whose 'tender mercies are over all his works.'

Providence provides likewise for the safety of man, against those things that threaten his ruin. Things which are the greatest blessings of nature, would be destructive, were there not a providence. The sun that enlightens and cherishes the world by its heat and influence, would be of no advantage were it situated at too great a distance, and would burn it up if it were too near. The sea would bring a deluge on the earth and swallow it up, if God had not, by his decree, fixed it within certain bounds, and made the shore an enclosure to it, and said, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.' The elements, though advantageous to us by their due temperature and mixture, would otherwise be destructive. The various humours and jarring principles in our bodies would tend to destroy us, were they not tempered and disposed by the God of nature for the preservation of life and health. The wild beasts would destroy us, had not God put the fear and dread of man into them, or, at least, caused them not to desire to be where men live,—the forests and desert places, remote from cities, being allotted for them. Some creatures would be destructive to men, by the increase of their number, did they not devour one another; and insects would destroy the fruits of the earth, did not one season of the year help forward their destruction, as another tends to breed them. Men themselves, by reason of their contrary tempers and interests, and that malice and envy which is the consequence of our apostacy, would destroy one another, if there were not a providence that restrains them, and gives a check to that wickedness that is natural to them, and thus keeps the world in a greater measure of peace than it would otherwise possess. Hence, the Psalmist says, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.'<sup>a</sup>

It is objected by atheists, against the being of a God, that the wicked are observed to prosper in the world, and the righteous are oppressed. This objection the Psalmist was almost overcome by. 'My feet,' says he, 'were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped; for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.'<sup>b</sup> In answer to this objection, let it be observed, 1. That the idea of infinite sovereignty is included in that of a God; so that the distribution of good and evil, if made at any time without regard to the deserts of men, argues the sovereignty of providence, and therefore proves that there is a God, who gives no account of his matters, but has an absolute right to do what he will with his own. 2. There is a display of infinite wisdom in these dispensations of providence. The good man is made better by affliction, and experiences in consequence the kindness and care of providence; and the wicked man is forced to own, by his daily experience, that all the outward blessings he enjoys in this world cannot make him easy or happy, or be a sufficient portion for him. 3. Outward prosperity does not prevent or remove inward remorse, or terror of conscience, which embitters the joys of the wicked. 'A dreadful sound is in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.'<sup>c</sup> 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.'<sup>d</sup> And on the other hand, outward trouble in the godly is not inconsistent with spiritual joy and inward peace; which are more than a balance for all the distresses they labour under. It is said, 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.'<sup>e</sup> 'He shall be satisfied from himself.'<sup>f</sup> 4. When we determine a person happy or miserable, we are not to judge of things according to their present appearance, but are to consider the end of circumstances, since every thing is well that ends well. Thus the Psalmist, who, as was before observed, was staggered at the prosperity of the wicked, had his faith established, by considering the different events of things. Concerning the wicked, he says, 'Thou didst set them

a Psal. lxxvi. 10.

d Prov. xiv. 13.

b Psal. lxxiii. 2, 3.

e Prov. xiv. 10.

c Job xv. 21.

f Prov. xiv. 14.

inslippery places ; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment ! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh ; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.'<sup>g</sup> This is a very beautiful expression, representing all their happiness as imaginary, a vain dream, and such as is worthy to be contemned. But as for the righteous, he represents them as under the special protection and guidance of God here, and as at last received to glory, there to enjoy him as their everlasting portion.

VIII. The being of a God appears from the foretelling of future events, which have come to pass according to the predictions. For,

1. No creature can, by his own wisdom or sagacity, foretell future contingent events with an infallible knowledge, or otherwise than by mere conjecture. 'Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.'<sup>h</sup> Our knowledge reaches no farther than to see effects, and judge of them in and by their causes. Thus we may easily foretell that necessary causes will produce those effects that are agreeable to their nature ; but when the effects are not necessary but contingent, or purely arbitrary, we have nothing to judge by, and cannot come to the knowledge of things future, without an intimation of them given us by Him who orders and disposes of all things. Hence to foretell things to come in this sense, is an evident proof of the being of God.

2. That there have been predictions of contingent events, and that the things foretold have come to pass, is very obvious from scripture ; and if it be highly reasonable to believe that which is so well-attested as scripture is, we are bound to conclude that there is a God. But since we are arguing, at present, with those who deny a God, and consequently all scripture-revelation, we will only suppose that they whom we contend with will allow that some predictions of contingent events have been made and fulfilled ; and then it will follow, that these could have been made in no other way but by intimation from one who is omniscient,—and that is God. [See note G, p. 23.]

Having considered how the being of God is proved by the light of nature and by the works of God, we shall proceed to show how it appears from scripture ; as it is observed in this answer, that 'the word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.' The arguments hitherto laid down are directed more especially to those who are not convinced that there is a God, and consequently deny the divine origin of scripture. But this argument supposes a conviction of both. It must not, however, be supposed unnecessary ; for as we are often exposed to temptations which, though they may not lead us peremptorily to deny that there is a God, may tend to stagger our faith, we may desire some evidence of God's being and perfections additional to what the light of nature affords,—and this we have in the scriptures. In these the glory of God shines forth with the greatest lustre ; and they furnish an account of works more glorious than those of nature,—works included in the way of salvation by a Mediator. The light of nature proves, indeed, that there is a God ; but the word of God discovers him to us as a reconciled God and Father to all who believe, and is also accompanied in their experience with internal convictions of this truth which are produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and with evidences of it which consist in his peculiar gifts and graces. It is well observed, therefore, that only that knowledge of the being of God which is derived from the scriptures, is sufficient and effectual to salvation. The knowledge of God which may be attained by the light of nature is sufficient, indeed, in some measure, to restrain our corrupt passions ; and it is conducive to the peace and welfare of civil society : it affords some conviction of sin, and, in some respects, leaves men without excuse, and renders their condemnation less aggravated than that of those who sin against the gospel light. Still it is insufficient to salvation ; since it is a truth of universal extent, that there is salvation in no other than Christ,<sup>i</sup> and that it 'is life eternal to know' not only the true God, but 'Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent,'<sup>k</sup>—and this can be known, not by the light of nature, but only by divine revelation.

This leads us to consider in what respect the knowledge of God, as it is contained in and derived from scripture, is sufficient to salvation. Here we do not assert the sufficiency of this knowledge exclusive of the aids of divine grace, so as to oppose the word to the Spirit. It is said, in this answer, that the word and Spirit of God alone can reveal him to men sufficiently to their salvation. The word is a sufficient rule, so that we need no other to be a standard of our faith, and to direct us in the way to eternal life; but it is the Spirit that enables us to regard, understand, and apply this rule, and to walk according to it. These two are not to be separated. The Spirit doth not save any without the word; and the word is not effectual to salvation, unless made so by the Spirit.

That nothing short of scripture-revelation is sufficient to salvation, will appear, if we compare it with the natural knowledge we have of God. For, 1. Though the light of nature shows us that there is a God, it doth not fully display his perfections and character, as they are manifested in scripture; wherein God is beheld in the face of Christ. It doth not discover any thing of the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the divine essence, who are equally the object of faith; nor doth it give us any intimation of Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, in whom we obtain forgiveness of sins. These truths are known only by scripture-revelation. And since the knowledge of them is necessary to salvation, we are bound to conclude that the scripture alone is sufficient to lead to it. 2. Though the light of nature suggests that God is to be worshipped, yet there is an instituted way of worshipping him, which depends wholly on divine revelation. And since the observance of this is necessary, it proves the necessity of scripture. 3. There is no salvation without communion with God: he that does not enjoy him here, shall not enjoy him hereafter. Now the enjoyment of God is attained by faith, which is founded on scripture. Thus the Apostle says, 'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.'<sup>1</sup>

But it is one thing to say, that the knowledge of God, which is derived from scripture, is sufficient to salvation in an objective way,—that is, that it is a sufficient rule to lead us to salvation; and another thing to say, that it is made effectual thereunto. We are now, therefore, to inquire when the doctrines contained in scripture are made effectual to salvation. And they are made so not by the skill or wisdom of men representing them in their truest light, nor by all the power of reasoning which we are capable of, without the aids of divine grace, but only by the Holy Spirit. And this he does, 1. By the internal illumination of the mind,—giving a 'spiritual discerning' of divine truth, which, as the apostle says, the 'natural man receiveth not.'<sup>m</sup> And this is called, 'a shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.'<sup>n</sup> 2. By subduing the obstinate will of man, and so enabling it to yield a ready, cheerful, and universal obedience to the divine commands contained in scripture; and, in particular, inclining it to own Christ's authority as King of saints, and to say, as converted Paul did, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'<sup>o</sup> 3. By exciting in us holy desires after God and Christ, and a very high esteem and value for divine truth; by removing all those prejudices which there are in our minds against the word; and by opening and enlarging our hearts to receive it, and to comply with all its commands. Thus the 'Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.'<sup>p</sup> And David prays, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!'<sup>q</sup>

l 1 John i. 3.  
o Acts ix. 6.

m 1 Cor. ii. 14.  
p Acts xvi. 14.

n 2 Cor. iv. 6.  
q Psal. cxix. 18. compared with v. 5.

[NOTE E. *Natural Religion*.—Dr. Ridgely asserts, or simply takes for granted, that by reason or the light of nature, 'without the aid of special revelation, it may be known that there is a God.' He does not very distinctly say what he means by 'the light of nature,' but seems, in the next paragraph, to understand by it, both the active exercise of judgment in adults, and the undeveloped capacity of reason in infants. Does he intend, then, to say that there is constitutionally in the human mind, a religious light,—a light which discovers the existence of the Deity? or that man is born with the idea of a God? If he does, all facts and common sense are in opposition to his



theory. That man has a capacity of reason, or even a conscience or moral sense, no more proves that he is born with a theological idea, than that he has eyes and ears and all the mechanism and capacity of perception, proves that he is born with the idea of towns and landscapes, of noise and symphonies.

But does Dr. Ridgeley mean by 'the light of nature,' a power in man to infer religious truths from the appearances of design and wisdom in the universe? Then, what nation, or what individual, ever successfully used this power? what nation, or what individual, ever discovered, 'without the aid of special revelation,' that there is a God? Man unquestionably has capacity to see, in the physical phenomena around him, many evidences of 'the eternal power and Godhead' of Deity, *when they are pointed out to him* (Rom. i. 19, 20.); but has he, in any instance, detected them by his unaided reason? or has he even, by his own effort, conquered a strong natural disinclination either to look at them, or to receive the truth which they evince? Man, in his natural condition, is unwilling to know God. Even after the fact of the divine existence is *communicated* to him, he 'does not like to retain God in his knowledge,'—Rom. i. 28. The whole ancient heathen world 'walked in vanity of mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts,'—Eph. iv. 17, 18.\* They were naturally or constitutionally characterized by alienation from God, by darkness, by ignorance, by blindness of heart; and though they received many intimations of the divine existence, and not a few details as to even his character, works, and will, 'they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and changed his glory into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,'—Rom. i. 21—23. Now if man is constitutionally a biter of the idea of God,—if he is averse to inquire after it,—if, when it is communicated to him, he likes not to retain it, and transmutes and modifies it into the idea of a mere creature; on what principle of consistency, or by what law of probability, can he be supposed capable of making an original conception of God, or of effecting a discovery of his existence?

As regards both the being of God, and all other subjects embraced by what is usually styled 'natural religion,' there were pristine revelations made to the whole world. During the entire period from the fall of Adam till the death of Jacob, there were living among men some individuals who received oracles from heaven, and multitudes who had been instructed by either these men or their predecessors. Revelation was probably not less abundant among mankind at large previously to the call of Abraham, than in the Hebrew commonwealth subsequent to the death of Moses; or if not so full, or in so fixed a form, it was at least as frequently made, and as extensively communicated. The antediluvians sunk into corruption, and the people of the patriarchal age into polytheism, not from any deficiency in supernatural instruction, but from that strong constitutional enmity against God which frequently seduced the Israelites themselves—seduced them even amid the prodigies of the revelation from Sinai—into debasing idolatry. Nothing—not even line upon line, and precept upon precept of supernatural instruction—could keep God's own peculiar people from sinking into practical atheism, without the aid of constant divine guardianship, of occasional miracles, and of frequent national chastisements. The universal idolatry of other nations is hence a proof that all had received revelation, and that all were averse to the lessons which it taught: it exhibits them as exactly in the position which the Israelites, after being well-instructed from heaven, would again and again have permanently occupied, had they not been reclaimed by special divine interference. If then, amid the abounding light of revelation in the patriarchal age, and amid the special, miraculous light of revelation under the Mosaic economy, human reason displayed an uniform and inveterate tendency to plunge into polytheism, how, or in what imaginable age or circumstances, can it be supposed to have discovered either the existence of a supreme and only Deity, or any other doctrine of natural religion?

Whatever reason may be supposed able to accomplish in man's fallen state, it could doubtless most easily achieve in his state of innocence. Man, in paradise, was unenfeebled by depravity, unwarped by prejudice, and unfooled by ignorance; he was distinct in his conceptions, perspicacious in his judgments, vigorous, searching, and accurate in his reasonings; yet, even in that condition, he appears to have received all his religious knowledge by revelation. Whatever ideas of God, of immortality, or of his own state and duties he possessed, were communicated to him by the Deity. Not only did he enjoy the light of one grand revelation, but he constantly walked in vocal and visible intercourse with God. What a commentary is his paradisaic history upon the absence of all 'natural religion,' and the deep necessity for a revelation, among his sinful degraded posterity!

All the ancient nations who were cotemporary with the Hebrew commonwealth, received whatever religious ideas they possessed through tradition from the ante-Mosaic revelations. "All the knowledge," says Shuckford, "which the ancients had on religious subjects, lay at first in a narrow compass; they were in possession of a few truths which they had received from their forefathers; they transmitted these to their children, only telling them that such and such things were so, but not giving them reasons for, or demonstrations of, the truth of them. Philosophy was not disputative till it came into Greece; the ancient professors had no controversies about it; they received what was handed down to them, and out of the treasure of their traditions imparted to others; and the principles they went upon to teach or to learn by, were not to search into the nature of things, or to consider what they could find by philosophical examinations, but, 'Ask, and it shall be told you; search the records of antiquity, and you shall find what you inquire after,'—these were the maxims and directions of their studies." (Shuckford, vol. i. preface, pp. 47, 48.) Even when the heathen philosophers launched into speculation and inquiry, they steered in the light not only of tradition from patriarchal revelation, but of information received from the Jewish people, or in some instances, perhaps, immediately derived from the Jewish scriptures. Yet what theological discoveries did they achieve? what doctrines of natural religion did they clearly or consistently discern? They confounded the Deity with his works; they believed in the eternity of

matter; they dreamed of an abstract necessity or fate to which God as well as man is subject; and, either in these or in other respects, they entertained notions utterly incompatible with a true idea of either God or moral obligation. Even with all their aids from tradition and the Jews, they failed, by the most vigorous and prolonged efforts of reason, to produce more than a hideous caricature of the most obvious of those doctrines which pass under the name of natural religion. Who, then, can doubt that, had they wanted the aids which were afforded them, they could not have made so much as one theological discovery?

In the proper sense of words, none know God but those who are taught by the Divine Spirit. Proofs of God's existence and representations of his character, drawn directly from revelation, or detected by the light of it in the works of creation, fail, when exhibited by mere reason, to carry distinct or true ideas to the human understanding. Unregenerated men, after all they can learn from human teaching, or from a natural study of the scriptures and of expositions of theology, are *ἀθιστοὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*, 'atheists in the world,'—Eph. ii. 12. Their ideas of God, and of his government, though not so gross as those of polytheists, are as essentially imaginary, and as utterly unconnected with any true devotion, any real religion. Fallen man can know the Divine Being only in connexion with the plan of redemption. Adam, when he was created, required a paradisaic revelation, to teach him the religion of a state of innocence; and when he fell, he equally required, and he received, a revelation of the mediation of a Saviour, to teach him religion in his new condition. Whether, without the new revelation, he would or could have retained the knowledge of God which he possessed before he fell, needs not be inquired; for he obviously needed that knowledge to be so revived, enlarged, and modified, as to be adapted to his new circumstances, else the second revelation would not have been so immediately given. God, to be known at all by fallen man, must be known as just and yet merciful, an avenger of sin and yet long-suffering to the sinner; and he can be known thus only 'in the face of Christ Jesus.' While whatever views men received of his being and character were afforded directly or indirectly by supernatural communication, all revelation, from the announcement to Adam of a Saviour till the close of the writings of John, proceeded on the scheme of redemption, and was made through the mediation of Christ. 'Natural religion,' therefore, as to even its elementary doctrines of the divine existence, is either a delusion of the fancy, or an unacknowledged transcript of the lessons of inspiration. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,'—John i. 18. 'No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,'—Matt. xi. 27.

All proofs, then, of the existence of God, derive their origin and force from revelation. Those which rest on abstract reasoning, are simply exhibitions of what the enlightened understanding has learned in the Bible; and those which rest on the appearances of design and skill in the universe, are God's own commentaries in his word of inspiration on the works of his hands. A doctrine—the doctrine of God's existence, that of his unity, that of his providence, or any other of an elementary character—is learned, directly or indirectly, from scripture; it is studied in the light in which scripture exhibits it; it is believed on the evidence which scripture displays in support of it; and only then is it announced as a doctrine of 'natural religion,' and worked up into a laboured theory or demonstration sustained or vindicable by reason. Scripture not only furnishes the substratum of all the theology claimed for 'the light of nature,' but suggests, and in some instances details, the arguments which reason adduces in its support. What, for example, is the beautiful interrogation of the Psalmist but the stamen of what has vegetated in the hot-house of reason into many a laboured proof of the divine perfections: 'He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?'—Ps. xciv. 9, 10. Or what is the sublime and prolonged answer which God made to Job out of the whirlwind, but a brilliant summary of all the thousand gorgeous proofs which have been furnished of the divine existence and government, wisdom, power, and beneficence, from the facts and phenomena of nearly all the physical sciences? See Job, chap. xxxviii, xxxix. But for the hints given, and the illumination communicated, by these portions of scripture, and by multitudes of others of a similar description, man, in the nineteenth century, would have continued to make as blundering, irreligious, and heathenish an use of the lessons of cosmogony, zoology, astronomy, and providence, as in the ante-Mosaic age, or during the palmy days of the Greek philosophy. What is called 'the book of nature' is, in all respects, a book lying open in darkness, till its pages are illuminated and its lessons brought into view, by the light of revelation.

Proofs, then, of all religious doctrines, be they what they may, ought to be stated and illustrated professedly on the authority of scripture. Whatever theorists or systematic theologians may think to the contrary, a plain statement from the divine word will go farther to arrest the attention and shake the prejudices of even an atheist, than the most elaborate 'demonstration,' on what are termed 'the principles of reason.' Man's pride, far more than the interest of truth, is concerned in working up a hint of scripture into a profound abstract argument. Revelation is felt by even an enlightened Christian mind—and felt increasingly in the very proportion of its enlightenment—to be as essential to the guidance and successful issue of any religious effort of reason, or any portion of theological argumentation, as the light and heat of the sun are to the cares and labours of agriculture. Hence, Dr. Ridgeley—though inconsistently with his sentiments respecting 'the light of nature'—correctly and very beautifully intersperses his leading proofs of the divine existence with illustrations and quotations from scripture. Without these, his arguments, in some instances, would be dim and indistinct even to Christians; while with them, and by means of them, they become intelligible to the most obtuse understandings, and fitted to confound the most obdurate prejudices.

Much is gained with infidels, and nothing lost, by discarding the notion of 'natural religion.' The evidences for the genuineness, credibility, and inspiration of scripture, are both more easily



led and more facile of comprehension, than those usually adduced for man's moral accountability, and kindred doctrines on the principles of mere reason; and they possess the high recommendation, that they strike infidelity, and paganism, and Mahommedanism, and all the forms of practical atheism, at their roots. One of Dr. Ridgeley's proofs of the being of God, for example, is derived from the giving and fulfilment of prophecy (See afterwards the passage indicated by the note '*Proof of the being of God from prophecy*'): it is in reality a direct and conclusive proof of the inspiration of scripture; and, as adduced for Dr. Ridgeley's purpose, it affords an instance of what a waste of time and attention there is, in setting up natural religion as anterior to revelation. The grand, indeed the only religious office of reason, apart from the teaching of scripture, is simply to examine the evidences of our having a revelation; and when it has been convinced by these, it ought to conceive every doctrine in the light in which revelation represents it, and bow with submission to every lesson which revelation inculcates. Were reason always restricted to these limits—were it not set up by human pride as a discoverer and propounder of theological truths anterior to revelation, or abstractedly from its instructions—there would be less practical atheism in the world, less distortedness of vision in looking at the fundamental principles of religion, fewer misapprehensions, fallacious views, and caricatured representations of the character and government of Deity.

The preceding remarks all proceed on a strictly theological view of the question of Natural religion. After writing them, I thought that a very satisfactory corroboration of them might be furnished by exhibiting the question in a historical view. To do this, however, would require greatly more space than can be apportioned to a single note. I shall only state that the very learned critic and historian, Dr. Shuckford, after a long and elaborate induction of facts, arrives, simply in the light of history, at just the same conclusion which I have attempted to vindicate. The terms in which he sums up his argument are these:—"All history, both sacred and profane, offers us various arguments to prove that God revealed to men in the first ages how he would be worshipped; but that, when men, instead of adhering to what had been revealed, came to *lean to their own understandings*, and to set up what they thought to be right, in the room of what God himself had directed, they lost and bewildered themselves in endless error. This, I am sensible, is a subject which should be examined to the bottom; and I am persuaded, if it were, the result of the inquiry would be this,—that he who thinks to prove that the world ever did in fact '*by wisdom know God*,'—that any nation upon earth, or any set of men, ever did, from the principles of reason only, without any assistance from revelation, find out the true nature and the true worship of the Deity—must find out some history of the world entirely different from all the accounts which the present sacred or profane writers give us; or his opinion must appear to be a mere guess and conjecture of what is barely possible, but what all history assures us never really was done in the world."—Shuckford's *Connexion of the Sacred and Profane History of the World*, vol. i. p. 323.—ED.]

[NOTE F. *Proof of the Being of God from the absence of creative power in the creature*.—This argument for the being of God from the light of nature, is really an argument from the want of creative power in the creature. Like many others which profess to elicit proof independently of the light of scripture, it is futile and inconclusive. It takes for granted that creation was "the making of something out of nothing, or out of matter altogether unfit to be made into what is produced out of it." But this is to prove a more obvious point from a more difficult one; it is to take for granted what is comparatively obscure, and argue from it what is comparatively clear. Most of the ancient philosophers freely admitted the existence of Deity, and, at the same time, contended for both the eternity and the fitness of material substances. Dr. Ridgeley's argument would have appeared to them much more rational if it had inverted the order of the premises and the conclusion,—if, instead of assuming the creation of matter in order to prove the being of God, it had assumed the being of God in order to prove the creation of matter. The philosophers' doctrine, indeed, seems to enlightened reason abundantly absurd; but so does the doctrine of atheists; and both the one and the other have been contended for by natural reason, or what Dr. Ridgeley defines to be "the light of nature." Not only the being of God, then, but the fact from which he attempts to prove it—the creation of matter out of nothing—are learned, and can be rightly proved, not by reason, but from the lessons of revelation.—ED.]

[NOTE G. *Proof of the Being of God from prophecy*.—This argument takes for granted the credibility of scripture, and is a direct and leading proof of its inspiration; and only through the medium of the authority of scripture, does it prove the existence of God. See remarks upon it in Note '*Natural Religion*,' page 20.—ED.]

## THE TITLES, OBJECT, AND COMPLETENESS OF SCRIPTURE.

### QUESTION III. *What is the word of God?*

ANSWER. The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

In speaking to this answer, we shall consider the several names by which the scripture is set forth, with the import thereof, and more particularly that by which it is most known,—namely, the Old and New Testament; and then speak of it as a rule of faith and obedience.



*The several names given to scripture.*

The word of God is sometimes called his 'law,' 'statutes,' 'precepts,' 'commandments,' or 'ordinances;' to signify his authority and power to demand obedience of his creatures. This he does in his word,—showing us in what particular instances, and in what manner, we are to yield obedience. It is also called his 'judgments;' implying that he is the great Judge of the world, and that he will deal with men in a judicial way, according to their works, as agreeable or disagreeable to his law contained in his word. It is likewise called his 'righteousness;' because all that he commands in his word is holy and just, and his service is highly reasonable. It is also called his 'testimonies;' as containing the record or evidence which he has given of his own perfections,—whereby he has demonstrated them to the world. Thus we are said to 'behold,' as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.<sup>q</sup> It is also called his 'way;' as containing a declaration of the glorious works that he has done, both of nature and of grace,—a declaration of the various methods of his dealing with men, or of the way that they should walk in, which leads to eternal life. Moreover, it is called, 'the oracles of God;'<sup>r</sup> to denote that many things contained in it could not have been known by us till he was pleased to reveal them. The apostle, accordingly, speaks of the great things contained in the gospel, as being hid in God,—'hid from ages and generations past, but now made manifest to the saints.'<sup>s</sup> Again, it is sometimes called 'the gospel,'—especially those parts of it which announce the glad tidings of salvation by Christ, or the method which God ordained for taking away the guilt and subduing the power of sin. The apostle particularly calls it, 'The glorious gospel of the blessed God,'<sup>t</sup> and, 'the gospel of our salvation.'<sup>u</sup>

In this answer, the word of God is called the Old and New Testament. That part of it which was written before our Saviour's incarnation, and which contains a relation of God's dealings with his church, from the beginning of the world to that time, or a prediction of what should be fulfilled in following ages, is called the Old Testament. The other part, which contains an account of God's dispensation of grace, from Christ's first to his second coming, is called the New. A testament is the declared or written will of a person; by which some things are bequeathed to those who are concerned or described in it. The scripture is God's written will or testament, as containing an account of what he has freely given in his covenant of grace to fallen man. Hence it contains an account of many valuable legacies given to the heirs of salvation,—the blessings of both worlds, all the privileges contained in those great and precious promises with which the scripture abounds. Thus it is said, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory;'<sup>x</sup> and, 'The Lord will give grace and glory.'<sup>y</sup> It describes the testator, Christ; who gives eternal life to his people, and confirms all the promises which are made in him. These are said to be 'in him yea and amen, to the glory of God.'<sup>z</sup> More especially, he ratified this testament by his death; as the same apostle observes—which is a known maxim of the civil law—that 'where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator,'<sup>a</sup> upon which the force or validity of the testament depends. And the word of God gives us a large account how all the blessings which God bestows upon his people receive their validity from the death of Christ. It also discovers to us who are the heirs, or legatees, to whom these blessings are given; describing them as repenting, believing, returning sinners,—who may lay claim to the blessings of the covenant of grace. It, moreover, has several seals annexed to it, namely, the sacraments under the Old and New Testament; of which we have a particular account in scripture. [See Note H, end of section.] This leads us to consider,

q 2 Cor. iii. 18.

r 1 Tim. i. 11.

v Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

r Rom. iii. 2.

u Eph. i. 13.

z 2 Cor. i. 20.

s Ephes. iii. 9. Colos. i. 26.

x Psal. lxxiii. 24.

a Heb. ix. 16, 17.

*How the scripture is divided or distinguished.*

As to the Old Testament, it is sometimes distinguished or divided into 'Moses and the prophets,'<sup>b</sup> or 'Moses, the prophets, and the psalms.'<sup>c</sup> It may be considered also, as containing historical and prophetic writings, and writings that are more especially doctrinal or poetical. The prophets, too, may be considered as to the time when they wrote, some before and others after the captivity. They may be distinguished as to their subject-matter. Some contain a very clear and particular account of the person and kingdom of Christ,—as Isaiah, who is, for this reason, called, by some, the evangelical prophet; others contain reproofs, and denounce and lament approaching judgments,—as the prophet Jeremiah; others encourage the building of the temple, the setting up of the worship of God, and the reformation of the people upon their return from captivity,—as Zechariah and Haggai. As for the historical parts of scripture, these contain an account of God's dealings with his people, either before the captivity,—as Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, &c.; or after it,—as Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Books of the New Testament may be thus divided:—Some of them are historical, namely, such as narrate the life and death of our Saviour, as the four gospels, or the ministry of the apostles, and the first planting and spreading of the gospel, as the Acts of the apostles. Others are more especially doctrinal, and are written in the form of epistles by Paul and some other apostles. One, the book of Revelation, is prophetical; wherein are foretold the shifting condition of the church, the persecutions it should meet with from its anti-christian enemies, its final victory over them, and its triumphs as reigning with Christ in his kingdom. This leads us to consider

*When God first revealed his will to man in scripture, and how the revelation was gradually enlarged.*

There was no written word from the beginning of the world till the time of Moses, an interval of between two and three thousand years; and it was almost a thousand years longer before the canon of the Old Testament was completed by Malachi, the last prophet; and some hundred years after that, before the canon of the New Testament was given;—so that, as the apostle says, in the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews, God revealed his will 'at sundry times,' as well as 'in divers manners,' and by divers inspired writers.

The church, however, before it had a written word, was not destitute of a rule of faith and obedience, or unacquainted with the way of salvation. To suppose this, would be greatly to detract from the glory of the divine government, and reflect on God's goodness. He supplied the want of a written word by revealing his will in other ways. And he showed his sovereignty, in making known his will in whatever way he pleased; and his wisdom and goodness, in giving his written word at a time when the necessities of men most required it. When there was no written word, the Son of God frequently condescended to appear himself, and converse with man, and so reveal his mind and will to him. There was also the ministry of angels subservient to this end; for the word was often spoken by angels, sent to instruct men in the mind and will of God. The church had among them likewise, more or less, the spirit of prophecy, whereby many were instructed in the mind of God. And though the prophets were not commanded to commit to writing what they received by inspiration, yet they were authorized and qualified by it to instruct others in the way of salvation. Thus Enoch is said to have 'prophesied' in his days;<sup>d</sup> and Noah is called 'a preacher of righteousness.'<sup>e</sup> During great part of this time, the lives of men were very long, namely, eight or nine hundred years; and the same persons could transmit the word of God by their own living testimony. Afterwards, in the latter part of the period when there was no written word, the world apostatized from God, and almost all flesh corrupted their way,—not for want of a sufficient rule of obedience, but through the perverseness and de-

<sup>b</sup> Luke xvi. 29.<sup>c</sup> Luke xxiv. 44.<sup>d</sup> Jude 14, 15.<sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 5; Heb. xi. 7.

pravity of their natures ; and they almost wholly sunk into idolatry, and were judicially excluded from God's special care. And Abraham's family being the only church that remained in the world, God continued to communicate to them the knowledge of his will in the same extraordinary way that he had done in former ages. But when man's life was shortened and reduced to the same standard as now it is, of threescore and ten years, and the church had become very numerous, and God had promised that he would increase them yet more ; then they stood in need of a written word, to prevent the inconveniences that might have arisen from their continuing any longer without one, and God thought fit, as a great instance of favour to man, to command Moses to write his law, as a standing rule of faith and obedience to his church. This leads us to consider a very important question, namely,

*Whether the church, under the Old Testament dispensation, understood the written word, or the spiritual meaning of the laws contained in it ?*

Some have thought that the state of the church before Christ came in the flesh, was so dark that, though they had, in whole or in part, the scriptures of the Old Testament, they did not know the way of salvation. The papists generally assert that they did not ; and they therefore fancy, that all who lived before Christ's time were shut up in a prison, where they remained till he went from the cross to reveal himself to them, and, as their leader, conduct them in triumph to heaven. And some protestants think that the state of all who lived in those times was so dark that they knew but little of Christ and his gospel, though shadowed forth or typified by the ceremonial law ; and they found their opinion on the passage where Moses is said to have ' put a vail over his face, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished, which vail is done away in Christ ;' <sup>f</sup> and on those scriptures that speak of the Jewish dispensation, as ' a night of darkness ' compared with that of the gospel, which is represented as ' a perfect day,' or ' as the rising of the sun.' <sup>g</sup> As these persons extend the darkness of the Jewish dispensation farther than, as I humbly conceive, they ought to do ; so they speak more of the wrath, bondage, and terror which attended it, than they have ground to do,—especially when they make the darkness universal. There are several reasons which may induce us to believe that the Old Testament church understood a great deal more of the gospel, shadowed forth in the ceremonial law, and had more communion with God, and less wrath, terror, or bondage, than these persons suppose.

1. Some of the Old Testament saints expressed a great degree of faith in Christ, and love to him, and expected him to come in our nature ; and many of the prophets, in their inspired writings, discover that they were not strangers to the way of redemption, and reconciliation to God by him, as ' the Lord our righteousness.' A multitude of scriptures might be cited from the Old Testament, which speak of Christ, and salvation by him. <sup>h</sup> Thus Abraham is described as rejoicing to see his day ; <sup>i</sup> and the prophet Isaiah is so very particular and express in the account he gives of his person and offices, that I cannot see how any one can reasonably conclude him to have been wholly a stranger to the gospel himself. <sup>k</sup> Can any one think this, who reads his fifty-third chapter ; in which he treats of Christ's life, death, sufferings and offices, and of the way of salvation by him ? It is objected to this, that the prophets who delivered evangelical truths, understood but little of them themselves, because of the darkness of the dispensation they were under : it is said, that the prophets, indeed, ' searched ' into the meaning of their own predictions, but to no purpose ; for ' it was revealed to them, that not unto themselves, but unto us they ministered,' <sup>l</sup>—that is, the account they gave of our Saviour was designed to be understood, not by them, but by us, in this present gospel-dispensation. The answer that may be given to this objection is, that the prophets inquired into the meaning of their own prophecies, because their own sal-

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.

<sup>g</sup> Isa. xxi. 11 ; Cant. ii. 17 ; Mal. iv. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Jer. xxiii. 5, 6 ; Zech. xiii. 7 ; Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. compared with Rom. iv. 6.

<sup>i</sup> John viii. 56.

<sup>j</sup> Isa. xxii. 25, and lii. 13—15.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10—12.



vation was concerned in them. But we must not suppose that they inquired to no purpose, or were not able to understand them. And when it is farther said, that 'not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things that are now reported,' the meaning is, not that they did not understand those things, or had not much concern in them, but that the glory of the gospel state, which was foretold in their prophecies, was what we should behold with our eyes, and not they themselves. This objection, therefore, hath no force in it to overthrow the argument we are maintaining.

2. It is certain that the whole ceremonial law had a spiritual meaning annexed to it; for it is said that 'the law was a shadow of good things to come,'<sup>m</sup> and that all those things 'happened to them for ensamples, [or types,] and they are written for our admonition.'<sup>n</sup> Now it is unreasonable to suppose that the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial law should not be known by those to whom principally the law was given, or that the gospel, wrapt up in it, should not be seen till the dispensation was abolished, the ceremonial law abrogated, and the nation cast off to whom it was given.

3. The knowledge of the gospel, or faith in Christ founded on it, which is necessary for our salvation, was no less necessary for the salvation of those who lived in former ages; for it was as much a truth then as it is now, that there is salvation in no other. Hence the church of old were as truly obliged to believe in him who was to come, as we are to believe in him as having already come. But it is inconsistent with the divine goodness to require knowledge, and not to give any expedient to attain it. And while the Old Testament church were obliged to believe in Christ, they really were not able to do so, if they did not understand the meaning of that law which was the only means of revealing him. Or if Christ was revealed in the ceremonial law, and they had no way to understand it, he was the same to them as though he had not been revealed. Either, therefore, we must suppose that the knowledge of Christ was attainable by them, and consequently that he was revealed to them, or else they must have been excluded from a possibility of salvation.

4. They had sufficient helps for understanding the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial law. Not only were some hints of explication given in the Old Testament scriptures, but there was also extraordinary revelation. The Jewish church was more or less favoured with this, almost throughout the dispensation; and by means of it, together with the aid of the scriptures themselves, it is more than probable that they received the spiritual sense and meaning of those things which were contained in the Old Testament. Besides, there was one tribe, namely, that of Levi, almost entirely employed in studying and explaining the law of God. And it is said respecting them, 'They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law;'<sup>o</sup> 'the priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth;'<sup>p</sup> that is, the priests should, by all proper methods, understand the meaning of the law, that they might be able to teach the people when coming to be instructed by them. There were also among them, in some ages at least, several schools of the prophets. And some persons who belonged to these had extraordinary revelations; while they who had them not, made the scriptures their study, that they might be able to instruct others. From all this it appears, that the Jewish church had a great deal of knowledge of divine truth, and of the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament; though we will not deny that the gospel dispensation hath a clearer light, and excels in glory. We shall now proceed to show that

*Scripture is a rule of faith and obedience.*

Though the Jewish dispensation is abolished, the Old Testament is not to be set aside as a rule of faith and obedience to us, nor are we to reckon it an useless part of scripture, or one which does not concern us. The greatest part of the doctrines contained in it are of perpetual obligation to the church, in all its dispensations or changes. As for the ceremonial law, which is abolished, and some forensic or political laws by which the Jews, in particular, were

governed,—these, indeed, are not so far a rule of obedience to us, as that we should think ourselves obliged to observe them, as the Jews were of old. Yet even these are of use to us; for we see in them what was then the rule of faith and obedience to the church, and how far it agrees as to its substance, or the things signified by it, with the present dispensation; we see also the wisdom, sovereignty, and grace of God to his church in former ages, and how what was then typified or prophesied is fulfilled to us. Thus it is said, that ‘whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.’<sup>a</sup>

The scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a revelation of the whole mind and will of God, and therefore are justly styled a perfect rule of faith and obedience. We do not mean, however, that they contain an account of every thing that God hath done or will do, in his works of providence and grace, from the beginning to the end of time, for this is altogether unnecessary. Hence it is said that, while Christ did many other signs than are written in the gospel, those things which are contained in it ‘are written that we might believe;’<sup>r</sup> and that ‘there were many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, the world would not contain the books that should be written.’<sup>s</sup> Neither do we understand that God has given us in the scriptures an account of all his secret counsels and purposes relating to the event of things, or the final state of particular persons, abstracted from those marks on which our hope of salvation is founded, or of their outward condition, or the good or bad success that shall attend their undertakings in the world, or of the time of their living upon earth. These, and many other matters of a like nature, are secrets which we are not to inquire into; God, for wise ends best known to himself, not having thought fit to reveal them in his word. ‘Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children.’<sup>t</sup> When Peter was over curious in inquiring concerning the future state or condition of John, our Saviour gives him this tacit reproof, ‘What is that to thee?’<sup>u</sup> Nor are we to suppose that the divine perfections, which are infinite, are fully and adequately revealed to man; since, from the nature of the thing, it is impossible that they should. That which is in itself incomprehensible, cannot be so revealed that we should be able fully to comprehend it; though that which is possible, or at least necessary, to be known of God, is clearly revealed to us. Again, we do not suppose that every doctrine which is to be assented to as an article of faith, is revealed in express words in scripture; since many truths are to be deduced from it by just and necessary consequences, and thereby become a rule of faith. Nor are we to suppose that every part of scripture fully and clearly discovers all those things which are contained in the whole of it. There was increasing light given by degrees to the church, in succeeding ages, as it grew up from its infant state to a state of manhood. Hence there is a clearer and fuller revelation of the glorious mysteries of the gospel, under the New Testament dispensation, than there was before it. The apostle compares the state of the church under the ceremonial law, to that of ‘an heir under age,’ or of ‘children’ under the direction of ‘tutors and governors,’ whose instruction and advances in knowledge are proportioned to their age.<sup>x</sup> Thus God revealed his word ‘at sundry times,’ as well as ‘in divers manners.’<sup>y</sup>

The word of God, accompanied as it was with those helps which were before mentioned to an understanding of the sense of it, was always sufficient to lead men into the knowledge of divine truth; and the canon being completed, it is now so in an eminent degree. And it is agreeable to the divine perfections, that such a sufficient rule of faith and obedience should be given; for since salvation could not be attained, nor God glorified, without a discovery of suitable means, it is not consistent with his wisdom and goodness that we should be left in uncertainty, and at the same time rendered incapable of the highest privileges which attend instituted worship. Can we suppose that, when all other things necessary to salvation are adjusted, and many insuperable difficulties surmounted, and an invitation given to come and partake of it, that God should lay such a bar in our way as an impossibility

q Rom. xv. 4.

r John xx. 30.

s John xxi. 25.

t Deut. xxix. 29.

u John xxi. 21, 22.

x Gal. iv. 1, 3.

y Heb. i. 1.

to attain it for want of a sufficient rule? And since none but God can give us such a rule, it is inconsistent with his sovereignty to leave it to men to prescribe what is acceptable in his sight. They may, indeed, give laws, and thereby oblige their subjects to obedience; but these must be such as are within their own sphere. Their power does not extend itself to religious matters, so that our faith and duty to God should depend upon their will; for this would be a bold presumption, and an extending of their authority beyond due bounds. Since, therefore, a rule of faith is necessary, we must conclude that God has given us such a one; and it must certainly be worthy of himself, and therefore perfect, and every way sufficient to answer its design.

That the scripture is a sufficient rule of faith farther appears from the happy consequences of our obedience to it,—from that peace, joy, and holiness, which believers are made partakers of, while steadfastly adhering to it. Thus it is said that, ‘through comfort of the scriptures they have hope,’<sup>a</sup> and that by the teaching of scripture ‘the man of God is made wise to salvation, and perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’<sup>b</sup> The perfection of the law is demonstrated by the Psalmist, from its effects, that ‘it converts the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlignens the eyes.’<sup>b</sup>

We might further argue that the scripture is a perfect rule of faith, from the threatenings which are denounced against those who pretend to add to, or take from it. Tampering with scripture was strictly forbidden, even when but a part of it was committed to writing. Thus says God, ‘Ye shall not add to the word which I command you; neither shall you diminish ought from it.’<sup>c</sup> And the apostle denounces an anathema against any one who should pretend to ‘preach any other gospel,’ than that which he had received from God.<sup>d</sup> And in the close of scripture, our Saviour testifies to every man, that ‘if any should add to these things, God would add to him the plagues written in this book. And if any should take away from this book, God would take away his part out of the book of life.’<sup>e</sup> [See Note I, page 36.] We now proceed to show what are

*The properties of scripture as a rule of faith.*

1. A rule, when it is designed for general use, must have the sanction of public authority. Thus human laws, by which a nation is to be governed, which are a rule to determine the goodness or badness of men’s actions, and their desert of rewards or punishments accordingly, must be established by public authority. Even so the scripture is a rule of faith, as it contains the divine laws, by which the actions of men are to be tried, together with the ground which some have to expect future blessedness, and others to fear punishment.

2. A rule by which we are to judge of the nature, truth, excellency, perfection, or imperfection of any thing, must be infallible, or else it is of no use. And as such, nothing must be added to, or taken from it; for then it would cease to be a perfect rule. Thus it must be a certain and impartial standard, by which things are to be tried. Such a rule as this is scripture, as was but now observed. And it is an impartial rule, to which, as a standard, all truth and goodness are to be reduced, and by which they are to be measured. ‘To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’<sup>f</sup>

3. All appeals are to be made to a rule, and controversies to be tried and determined by it. Thus the scripture, as it is a rule of faith, is a judge of controversies. Whatever differences in sentiment men have about religion, must all be submitted to it, and the warrantableness of them tried by it. A stop is to be put to growing errors by an appeal to this rule, rather than to coercive power, or to the carnal weapons of violence and persecution. Moreover, the judgment we pass on ourselves, as being sincere or hypocrites, accepted or rejected of God, is to be formed by comparing our conduct with scripture, as the rule by which we are to try the goodness or badness of our state and of our actions.

z Rom. xv. 4.

a 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17.

b Psal. xix. 7, 8.

c Deut. iv. 2.

d Gal. i. 8, 9.

e Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

f Isa. viii. 20.



4. A rule must have nothing of a different nature set up in competition with, or opposition to it; for that would be to render it useless, and unfit to be the standard of truth. Scripture is the only rule of faith. No human traditions are to be set up as standards of faith in competition with it; for that would be to suppose it not a perfect rule. This the papists do; and therefore may be charged, as the Pharisees were of old by our Saviour, with 'transgressing and making the commandment of none effect, by their tradition,'<sup>f</sup> 'vainly worshipping God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'<sup>g</sup> What is such casting of contempt on the rule of faith which God hath given, but to reflect on his wisdom, and affront his authority and sovereignty?

*Tradition not a rule of faith.*

Having considered scripture as a rule of faith and obedience, we farther observe that it is the only rule in opposition to the popish doctrine of human traditions, which are pretended to be of equal authority with the word of God. By means of this doctrine the law of God is made void at this day, as it was by the Jews in our Saviour's time; and the scripture supposed to be an imperfect rule, the defects of which are to be supplied by traditions.

1. The doctrine is attempted to be defended from the passage in which our Saviour is said to have done 'many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written;'<sup>h</sup> from his own words, in which he tells his disciples that he 'had many things to say unto them which they could not then bear;'<sup>i</sup> and from the words of the apostle Paul, in which he puts the church in mind of a saying of our Saviour, received by tradition, because not contained in any of the Evangelists,—'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'<sup>k</sup>

To this argument it may be replied, 1. That though there were many things done, and words spoken by our Saviour, which are not recorded in scripture, and which we must be content not to know, being satisfied with this, that nothing is omitted which is necessary to salvation; yet to pretend to recover or transmit them by tradition, is merely to assert, and not to prove, the doctrine at issue. 2. Those things which our Saviour had to say, which he did not before his death impart to his disciples because they were not able to bear them, respected, as is more than probable, what he designed to discover to them after his resurrection, during his forty days abode on earth, or by his Spirit, after his ascension into heaven; and were such as concerned the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, the abolition of the ceremonial law, the spirituality of his kingdom, and matters relating to the success of their ministry, the gathering and governing of those churches which should be planted by them. These, which the apostles were less able to bear while our Lord's personal ministry continued than afterwards, seem to be the things intended; and not those doctrines which the papists transmit by oral tradition,—such as the use of oil and spittle together with water, and the sign of the cross in baptism, the baptism of bells, the lighting up of candles in churches at noonday, purgatory, praying for the dead, and giving divine adoration to images or relics,—doctrines which are altogether unscriptural, and such as he would not have, at any time, communicated unto them. 3. Though these words of our Saviour, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' are not contained in one distinct proposition, or in express words, in the gospels; yet he therein exhorts his people to 'give to him that asketh,' and speaks of the blessing that attends this duty, 'that they might be,' that is, approve themselves to be, 'the children of their Father,'<sup>l</sup> and exhorts them to hospitality 'to the poor,' and adds a 'blessing' to it.<sup>m</sup> But even supposing the apostle refers to a saying frequently used by our Saviour, which might then be remembered by some who had conversed with him; this is no sufficient warrant for any one to advance doctrines, contrary to those our Saviour delivered, under a pretence of having received them by unwritten tradition. [See Note K, p. 36.]

f Matt. xv. 3. 6.      g Verse 9.      h John xx. 30.

l Matt. v. 42. compared with 45.

i John xvi. 12.

k Acts xx. 35.

m Luke xiv. 12—14.

2. The doctrine of the papists is further defended from the words of the apostle, in which he advises Timothy to 'keep that which was committed to his trust,'<sup>a</sup> as if they had been traditions which he was to remember and communicate to others; and also from the advice he gives to the church at Thessalonica, to 'hold the traditions which they had been taught, either by word or by his epistle,'<sup>c</sup>—the former, say they, being unwritten traditions, the latter his inspired writings.

We reply, that what was committed to Timothy to keep, was either 'the form of sound words,' or the gospel, which he was to 'hold fast';<sup>p</sup> or the ministry which he had received of the Lord; or those gifts and graces which were communicated to him, to fit him for public service. [See Note L, p. 37.] And as for the traditions which he speaks of to the Thessalonians, his meaning is, that they should remember not only the doctrines they had received from him, which were contained in his inspired epistles, but those also which, being agreeable to scripture, he had imparted in the exercise of his public ministry,—the former to be depended upon as an infallible rule of faith, the latter to be retained and improved as agreeable to that rule, and no further. [See Note M, p. 37.]

3. The papists further add, that it was by means of tradition that God instructed his church for above two thousand years before the scripture was committed to writing.

To this it may be replied, that God communicated his mind and will during that interval, in an extraordinary manner, as has been before observed;<sup>q</sup> and this cannot be said of any of those traditions which are pleaded for by them.

4. It is further argued, that 'the book of the law' was formerly lost in Josiah's time; for it is said that when it was found, and a part of it read to him, 'he rent his clothes,' and was astonished, as though he had never read it before.<sup>r</sup> Yet he being a good man, was well-instructed in the doctrines of religion; and he must therefore have been instructed by tradition.

To this it may be answered, that though the book which was then found was doubtless an original manuscript of scripture, either of all the books of Moses or of Deuteronomy in particular; yet it is not to be supposed that he had never read the scriptures before. A person may be affected at one time in reading a portion of the word of God, which he has often read without impression. And doubtless, there were many copies of scripture transcribed, by which Josiah was made acquainted with the doctrines of religion, without learning them from uncertain traditions. [See Note N, p. 37.]

5. The papists further allege, that some books of the Old Testament are lost, and that their place must be supplied by traditions. The instances they give are of some books referred to in scripture, namely, 'the book of the wars of the Lord,'<sup>s</sup> 'the book of Jasher,'<sup>t</sup> 'the book of the acts of Solomon,'<sup>u</sup> and also his 'songs' and 'proverbs,' and the account he gives of 'trees, plants, beasts, fowls, creeping things, and fishes.'<sup>x</sup> There are also books said to be written by 'Samuel, Nathan, and Gad,'<sup>y</sup> the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer.<sup>z</sup> Likewise Jeremiah's lamentation for Josiah is said to be written in the book of the Lamentations;<sup>a</sup> whereas there is no mention of Josiah in that book of scripture; and it is alleged that there was some other book called by the same name, which was written by Jeremiah, but is now lost.

As to the argument in general, that some books of scripture are lost, suppose we should take it for granted that they are so, must this loss be supplied by traditions, pretended to be divine, though without sufficient proof? I am not willing, however, to make this concession. Some protestant divines, indeed, have made it,—thinking it equally supposable that some books written by divine inspiration might be lost, as that many words spoken by the same inspiration have been so. Yet even these constantly maintain, that whatever inspired writings may have been lost, there is no doctrine necessary to the edification of the church, in what immediately relates to salvation, but is contained in those writings which are preserved by the care

n 1 Tim. vi. 20.

r 2 Kings xxii. 8—11.

u 1 Kings xi. 41.

o 2 Thess. ii. 15.

s Numb. xxi. 14.

x 1 Kings iv. 32, 33.

a 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.

p 2 Tim. i. 13.

t 2 Sam. i. 18. compared with Joshua x. 13.

y 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

q See Ante p. 25.

z 2 Chron. ix. 29.

and goodness of providence, to this day. I adhere, however, to the more commonly received opinion, that no book, designed to be a part of the canon of scripture, is lost, though many uninspired writings have perished. And as to the books of Jasher, Nathan, &c., they might be books or parts of books of scripture, the inspired writers of which are not mentioned, and which, as is more than probable, were written by noted prophets who flourished in the church at the periods when they were respectively composed. Hence some persons suppose that the books of Nathan and Gad, or Iddo, are those of Kings or Chronicles, which are not lost. But since this is only a probable conjecture, we pass it over, and add, that it is not unreasonable to suppose that the books in question, as also those of Solomon which are not contained in scripture, were not written by divine inspiration. This is not only a safe but a sufficient answer to the objection. As for Jeremiah's lamentation for Josiah, it is probable that the book of scripture, which goes under that name, was written on the occasion of Josiah's death; and though the prophet doth not mention in it the name of that good king, yet he laments the desolating judgments which were to follow soon after his death.

6. The papists pretend also that some part of the New Testament is lost; particularly the 'epistle from Laodicea,' mentioned in Coloss. iv. 16,—one written to the Corinthians, 'not to company with fornicators,'<sup>b</sup> and another mentioned in 2 Cor. vii. 8. by which Paul made the Corinthians sorry.

As to the epistle from Laodicea, that was probably one of his inspired epistles, written by him when at Laodicea, and not directed, as is pretended, to the Laodiceans. As to the epistle which he is supposed to have written to the Corinthians 'not to company with fornicators,' it is not said to be an epistle which he had written to them before, but is plainly intimated to be the epistle which he was then writing to them, a part of which,<sup>c</sup> and particularly the immediate context, related to the subject of keeping company with fornicators. And as to the letter which he wrote to them, 'which made them sorry,' it is not necessary to suppose that it was written by divine inspiration; for as every thing he delivered by word of mouth, was not by the extraordinary afflatus of the Holy Ghost, why may we not suppose that there were several epistles written by him to the churches, some to comfort, others to admonish, reprove, or make them sorry, besides those that he was inspired to write?

*The completeness and purity of the canon of scripture.*

Having replied to the arguments brought to prove that some books of scripture are lost, we shall now prove, by direct evidence, that we have the canon complete and entire. Some think that the integrity of the canon is sufficiently evident from what our Saviour says, 'Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall not pass from the law;'<sup>d</sup> and 'it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail.'<sup>e</sup> If God will take care of every jot and tittle of scripture, will he not take care that no whole book, designed to be a part of the rule of faith, should be entirely lost? It is objected, indeed, that our Saviour intends principally the doctrines or precepts contained in the law; but if the subject-matter shall not be lost, surely the scripture that contains it shall be preserved entire. This will more evidently appear, if we consider that the books of the Old Testament were complete in our Saviour's time. It is said that 'beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.'<sup>f</sup> The apostle also says, 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning;'<sup>g</sup> and it is impossible that they should have been written for our learning if they are lost. Consider, likewise, the goodness of God, and the care of his providence, with respect to his church; if he gave them ground to conclude, that 'he would be with them always, even to the end of the world,' surely he would preserve from all the injuries of time, the rule he had given them to walk by, so that it should not be lost to the end of the world. Again, the Jews who were

b 1 Cor. v. 9.  
e Luke xvi. 17.

c See verse 12, 1 Cor. v.  
f Luke xxiv. 27.

d Matt. v. 18.  
g Rom. xv. 4.



the keepers of the oracles of God,<sup>h</sup> are not reproved by our Saviour, or the apostle Paul, for any unfaithfulness in not preserving them entire. And certainly our Saviour, when he reproves them for making void the law by their traditions, and threatens those that should add to or take from it, would have severely reproved them for so great breach of trust, if he had found them faulty, in not having faithfully preserved all the scriptures committed to them.

Some persons object against the scripture being a perfect rule of faith, that it is in several places corrupted. They say that the Old Testament was corrupted by the Jews, out of malice against our Saviour and the Christian religion, in order that they might conceal or pervert some prophecies relating to the Messiah and the gospel-state. And as to the New Testament, they pretend that it was corrupted by some heretics, in defence of their perverse doctrines. We reply that,

1. As to the Old Testament, it is very improbable and unreasonable to suppose that it was corrupted by the Jews. Before our Saviour's time, no valuable end could be answered by their corrupting it; for then they expected the Messiah to come, according to what was foretold by the prophets, and understood their predictions in a true sense. And even after he had come, and Christianity was established in the world, however malice might prompt them, they would not dare to corrupt the scripture; for they had been trained up in the notion, that it was the vilest crime to add to, take from, or alter the word of God. One of their own writers<sup>i</sup> says concerning them, that they would rather die an hundred deaths than suffer the law to be changed in any instance. Yea, they have such a veneration for the law, that if, by any accident, part of it should fall to the ground, they would proclaim a fast, fearing that for this, God would destroy the world, and reduce it to its original chaos. And can any one think, that, under any pretence whatever, they would designedly corrupt the Old Testament? Yea, they were so far from doing it, that they took care, to the greatest and even superstitious extent, to prevent its being corrupted through inadvertency; and, accordingly, they numbered not only the books and sections, but even the words and letters, that not a single letter might be added to, or taken from it. But even if they had had any inclination to corrupt the Old Testament out of malice against Christianity, they could not have succeeded after our Saviour's time; for the Old Testament was then translated into Greek, and was in the hands of almost all Christians; so that any attempt to corrupt it would soon have been detected. Had they altered some copies of the Hebrew bible, they could not have altered all; and would only have exposed themselves to no purpose. Nor would it have been for their own advantage to pervert the scripture, for, by altering the texts which make for Christianity, they would have weakened their own cause; and, if their fraud had been detected, the reputation of scripture would have been so lost that they could not have advantageously made use of it to prove their own religion. Besides, no alleged instances are given of the Old Testament having been corrupted, except in two or three words which do not much affect the cause of Christianity; whereas, if the Jews had designed to pervert it, why did they not alter the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and many other scriptures, which so plainly speak of the person and offices of the Messiah?

2. As to the other part of the objection, that the New Testament hath been corrupted by heretics since our Saviour's time,—though the Arians and some others may have left out some words or verses which tend to overthrow their scheme, they were never able, even when the empire was most favourable to their cause, to alter all the copies; and whatever alterations they made have been detected and amended. As for the various readings that there are of the same text, these consist principally in literal alterations, which do not much affect the sense. It was next to impossible for so many copies of scripture to be transcribed, without some mistakes; since they who transcribed them were not under the infallible direction of the Spirit of God, as the first penmen were. Yet the providence of God hath not suffered them to make notorious mistakes; and whatever mistakes are found in one copy, may be corrected by another. The scripture therefore is not, on account of these various readings, to be treated as though it were not a perfect rule of faith.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. iii. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Vid. Philo. Jud. de Vit. Mosis; et eund. citat. ab Euseb. in Præp.

Evang. l. viii. c. 6. et Jos. ph. contr. App. l. ii.

[NOTE H. *The Old and New Testament*.—The Hebrew word ברית means a constitution, an economy, or a system of promise, established or confirmed by sacrifice. In the multitudinous passages in which it occurs, the Septuagint uniformly translates it by the word διαθηκη; though, had the usage of the Greek classical authors been followed, it would have been translated by the word *εὐαγγέλιον*. If the sense of these authors be allowed, διαθηκη means a testament; and, if that of the Septuagint be followed, it means the same as the word ברית. The inspired writers of the new economy, in every instance in which Hebraistic Greek and classical Greek differed, adopted the former. They addressed themselves, in the first instance, to Jews; they employed that Greek which had been naturalized in the expression of the Jewish theology; they wrote, as to idioms and phraseology, in the light of the Septuagint. Διαθηκη, therefore, possesses, throughout both the old and the new scriptures, the signification and force of the Hebrew ברית, and ought to have been everywhere in our version translated by the word 'covenant.' But of the very numerous passages in which it occurs, there are four—2 Cor. iii. 16; Heb. vii. 22; Heb. ix. 15—20; and the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper—in which it is translated 'testament.' There is no warrant, however, either in the passages themselves, or in the analogy of faith to the idea of a testament, for departing from the usual meaning, and substituting this word. A testament, even with the ingenious glosses and constructions suggested by Dr. Ridgeley, expresses notions utterly incongruous with scriptural views either of the word of God or of the divine covenants.

As to the new covenant, or covenant of grace, in what just sense can it be called 'the declared or written will of Christ?' Like every other covenant—or system of promise confirmed by sacrifice—it has a dispenser by whom its promises are made, and a sacrificial victim by whose death its validity is established. But God is the dispenser: Christ is the sacrificial victim. A covenant—consisting, as it does, not of bequests to be executed by another, but of promises to be fulfilled by himself—cannot be called a testament in reference even to the dispenser: how much less, then, in reference to the sacrifice? If, too, Christ was a testator, and if he died to give validity to his testament, he needed to remain in a state of death. That a living person should execute his own testament, or dispense the boons which he had himself bequeathed, is an idea repugnant to the very nature of a testamentary transaction. The analogy, it may be said, does not hold in all particulars; but does it hold in any? The blessings of the new covenant are not property apart from the Deity, and bequeathed to future possessors: they are acts of the divine love, performed by the divine agency on the persons and hearts of the saved. The economy of dispensing them is not a declaration of will on the part of one person, and the execution of that declaration on the part of another, but a manifestation of mercy from first to last on the part of one God. The blessings do not pass from Deity as their present possessor, to be enjoyed by believers as the heirs of his property, but are gifts of his favour bestowed on them as ransomed captives,—as 'the purchased possession' of the Saviour. The new covenant, view it as we may, whether in reference to God as dispensing it, to the sacrifice of Christ as establishing it, to the nature of its blessings, or to the character and position of its objects, is, in all respects, a system of sovereign promise rendered right and practicable by the work of atonement. But what idea of sovereign promise, what idea of substitution, of mediation, of redemption by sacrifice, will comport with the notion of 'a person's declared and written will?'

As to the old covenant, what is it?—'the covenant of works,' or the covenant at Sinai? If the former, neither the word covenant, nor the word testament, nor any word or phrase of meaning similar to either, is applied to it in scripture. The Adamic dispensation, as we may in a future note have occasion to show, rested on no basis, and possessed no properties, of the nature of a covenant, and still less of the nature of testamentary bequest. All the parts of scripture, such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iv. 24, and various passages in the prophets, which mention or contrast 'the old covenant' and 'the new,' distinctly identify the former with the transaction at Sinai. Now the Sinaitic covenant, or Mosaic law, so far from being a bequest of property to heirs, was a legislative enactment to subjects; it spoke the language, not of a testator, but of a king and lawgiver; it addressed men, not as legatees who should at a future period receive what was then enjoyed by another, but as persons who might rebel, and should become amenable to punishment; it was established or confirmed, not by the death of him who gave it, but by the institution of a multifarious ritual of typical sacrifice; it was, on the one hand, given and dispensed by Jehovah, as King of Israel, and was, on the other, received and obeyed through the sacrificial slaughter of bulls and of goats. Both the old covenant, and the new likewise, were sovereign appointments, resting on God's authority as man's Creator and Judge, and solemnly enforced by penal sanctions. Men might not refuse the Sinaitic covenant, or disobey any of its injunctions, but at their peril; and still less may they despise or reject the covenant of grace, without incurring destruction. 'He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, whereby atonement was made, a common thing?' Heb. ix. 28, 29. The clause rendered, in the authorized version, 'wherewith he was sanctified,' is *ἐν ᾧ ἡγιασθη*. The verb *ἡγιασθαι* retains throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews its ritual signification, and means 'to atone.' See ii. 10; ix. 13; x. 10, 14. In x. 10, as in the present passage, the verb is in the passive voice, *ἡγιασμένοι ὡς*, 'We have had expiation made for us through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.' The phrase *ἐν ᾧ ἡγιασθη*, therefore, ought to be translated 'wherewith atonement was made for him,' or 'wherewith he was atoned for.' With no propriety, then, even with the utmost stretching and accommodation of metaphor, can either the old or the new covenant be called a testament.

There is just one passage which appears to militate against our conclusion, and it is grievously distorted by mistranslation: 'And for this cause, he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there



must also, of necessity, be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon, neither the first testament was dedicated without blood,' Heb. ix. 15—18. This passage lies in the centre of a consecutive and closely compacted argument, extending from the commencement of the eighth chapter to the eighteenth verse of the tenth. Both in the early parts of the argument, and toward the close, viii. 6, 8—10; ix. 4; x. 16, the same word occurs which is here rendered 'testament,' διαθηκη; and, in these places, it is, as it ought to be, uniformly translated 'covenant.' If it mean 'testament' in one part of the argument, it must mean so throughout. But what must be thought of the phrases, 'the mediator of a better testament,' 'the first testament had ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary,' 'the ark of the testament laid round about with gold?' Does a bequeathing of property require or admit the services of a mediator? or was such a transaction connected with the ceremonial of the Jewish sanctuary, or characteristic of the ark surmounted by the mercy-seat? From beginning to end of the argument, διαθηκη has clearly its ordinary meaning of 'covenant;' and, indeed, in several passages (viii. 8, 10; x. 16.), occurs in quotations from the Septuagint, and, through that medium, is identified with the Hebrew word ברית. In the sense of a constitution confirmed by sacrifice, it forms the pivot on which the whole of the apostle's argument turns. It, and the word rendered 'testator,' are derived from the same root, and embody the same leading idea. Διαθεμις is not a noun, but a participle, or a participial adjective; and, necessarily having an understood noun in regimen with it, denotes the covenanting, or covenant-confirming victim. The same noun which is understood with it ought clearly to have the place, in the phrase 'after men are dead,' which our translators give to the word 'men.' That phrase, νεκροί, is literally, 'upon, or over dead;' and, along with the understood noun, is 'over dead victims.' The entire passage, therefore, ought to be translated thus: 'And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where there is a covenant, there must of necessity be the death of the covenant-confirming victim; because a covenant is confirmed over dead victims, since it is not at all valid while the covenant-confirming victim liveth. Whereupon neither the first covenant was solemnized without blood.' That this is the true translation, or at least exhibits the true sense of the passage, is evident from what follows: 'For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet-wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined to you.' These words are so consecutive with what preceded them, that the 'calves' and the 'goats' are clearly the 'covenant-confirming, or dead victims' of the covenant. But were calves and goats 'testators?' I shall add the very apposite and luminous remarks of McKnight on the passage: "The things affirmed in the common translation concerning the new testament, namely, that it has a mediator, that that mediator is the testator himself, that there were transgressions of a former testament, for the redemption of which the mediator of the new testament died, and that the first testament was made, by sprinkling the people in whose favour it was made with blood,—are all things quite foreign to a testament. For was it ever known in any nation that a testament needed a mediator? or that the testator was the mediator of his own testament? or that it was necessary the testator of a new testament should die to redeem the transgressions of a former testament? or that any testament was ever made by sprinkling the legatees with blood? These things, however, were usual in covenants. They had mediators who assisted at the making of them, and were sureties for the performance of them. They were commonly ratified by sacrifices, the blood of which was sprinkled on the parties; withal, if any former covenant was infringed by the parties, satisfaction was given at the making of a second covenant. By calling Christ 'the mediator of the new testament,' our thoughts are turned away entirely from the view which the scriptures give us of his death as a sacrifice for sin; whereas, if he is called 'the mediator of the new covenant,' which is the true translation of διαθεμις καὶνῆς διαθήκης, that appellation directly suggests to us that the new covenant was procured and ratified by his death as a sacrifice for sin."

As to applying the name 'old and new testaments' to the scriptures, the only text which appears to sanction it is, like that in Hebrews, disfigured by mistranslation of the word διαθηκη. When rightly translated, it reads thus: 'Who hath made us able ministers of the new covenant;' 'Until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old covenant,' 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14. The first part of it seems to refer, not to the scriptures, but to the great doctrines of the new dispensation,—those which announce the ratification of the covenant of redemption; and the second part of it does not necessarily refer to more of the Jewish scriptures, than those portions of them which exhibit the covenant made at Sinai. But though the name 'old and new covenants' were given, as it may not improperly be, to the entire scriptures of the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, it would simply be an instance of the common metonymy which gives the name of a transaction to the document which records it. The Jewish scriptures are the old covenant, merely as exhibiting the covenant made at Sinai, and the apostolic scriptures are the new covenant, merely as exhibiting the covenant of grace.

The scriptures are in no sense testaments. To remove absurdity from the idea of their being so, Dr. Ridgeley is obliged to treat them, not as two testaments, but as one. He is also forced into the inconsistency of representing this at one time as the testament of Deity, and at another as the testament of the mediator. Scripture, according to its own account, is a 'law,'—a system of 'statutes,' 'ordinances,' 'oracles,'—a record, 'a testimony,' 'a word,' or discourse. As proceeding from God, it is the statute-book and oracle of the supreme lawgiver and guide; as proceeding from the mediator, it is the record of the 'faithful and true witness,' as jointly revealing the divine character and will, and describing the work of redemption, it is 'the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.' But a testimony, a statute-book, a supernatural communication, are ideas widely alien from that of a testament.



Dr. Ridgeley not only calls scripture a testament, but says that 'Christ ratified it by his death.' Scripture, however, did not need ratification. The offering of a divinely qualified sacrifice was necessary in order to the bestowal of the blessings of the everlasting covenant; but was not needed in order to the revelation of the divine will. All scripture, indeed, points to Christ, and receives its import from his mediatorial work; but if, for this reason, it was ratified by his death, it must, on the same principle, have been ratified by all the events which it records, and particularly by the fulfilment of the prophecies which it contains. Scripture would not be *true* if Christ had not died; but neither would it be true if Cyrus, or Antiochus Epiphanes, or any other person described in its prophecies, had not acted as it foretold. Christ *fulfilled* scripture, but did not ratify it: he verified his *testimony*, and ratified the divine *covenant*.

Dr. Ridgeley speaks, likewise, of the seals annexed to scripture as a testament. But in what sense, or by what stretch of metaphor, can 'the sacraments under the old and new testament' be said to *seal* the word of God? The only sacrament called a 'seal' is circumcision; and it is declared to have been, not a seal of divine revelation, but 'a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised,' Rom. iv. 11. We read of the Father having sealed the Son, John vi. 27; of believers being sealed by the Holy Spirit, Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; of the servants of God being sealed on their foreheads, Rev. vii. 2-4; of the converted Corinthians having been sealed of Paul's apostleship, 1 Cor. ix. 2; of transgression being sealed, Job xiv. 17; of the Lord's knowledge of his people being a seal that they are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19; and of believers, by their practical exhibition of the truth of Christianity, setting to their seal that God is true, John iii. 33,—but where have we even a hint that 'the sacraments' seal the divine word? If, in any due sense of the metaphor, scripture was ever sealed, its seals are the verification of its doctrines in the experience of converted sinners, the fulfilment of its prophecies, and the miracles which attended its first promulgation.

The name 'Old and New Testament' has been so long in general use as a designation of scripture, that it will probably remain while the English language endures. As conveniently distinguishing the scriptures of the former dispensation from those of the present, it ought to give place to the significant designation, 'the old and new covenant;' though, if used simply for sake of distinction, and only, like the word 'Bible,' as a conventional title, it cannot do much harm. The sting of its impropriety consists in ascribing to the divine word the properties and accidents of a testamentary document, and, particularly, in indirectly identifying the same properties and accidents with the covenant of redemption. Whoever uses the word 'testament' to designate scripture, should take care that the ideas of testatorship, legateship, and testamentary sealing and ratification, be not associated with the notion either of divine revelation, or of the covenant of grace.—Ed.]

[NOTE I. *The Sufficiency of Scripture*.—Dr. Ridgeley rather misses the point of his last argument. The passage in Deuteronomy declares the completeness of the Mosaic law, as the ceremonial, judicial, and moral code of the Jewish dispensation; and the passage in Revelation declares the completeness of the canon, or of the entire scriptures, as a permanent rule of faith to man. Additional to the arguments adduced by Dr. R., the sufficiency of scripture may be proved from its being a work of God, and, like every other work of his, perfect in its kind,—from its fitness to produce faith, hope, spiritual worship, saving knowledge, and all the other practical ends of a revelation,—from the multiplicity, variety, and minuteness of its illustrations of leading doctrines and duties,—from the adaptation of its lessons to all possible diversities of human character, experience, and condition,—and from such declarations as these: 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,' 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. 'Bind up the testimony, seal the law, among my disciples. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. viii. 16, 20. 'These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so,' Acts xvii. 11. 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead,' Luke xvi. 29, 31.—Ed.]

[NOTE K. *Unwritten sayings of Christ*.—The only point sought to be proved here by the Romanists is, that there were sayings of Christ, remembered by his immediate disciples, which were not committed to writing; and this point is not denied, nor does it, in any respect, countenance the doctrine of tradition, or militate against the sufficiency of scripture. John expressly says, 'There are many other things which Jesus did,' sayings, doubtless, which he spoke, as well as deeds which he performed, 'the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written;' but he immediately adds, 'But these'—these which have been selected and recorded by inspiration—'are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name,' John xxi. 25; xx. 31. Only such sayings as are written, therefore, are our guide in believing, or form part of our rule of faith; and these are so sufficient, so perfect, for every purpose of religion, that the faith of them involves spiritual and eternal life. The unwritten sayings were, for the most part, such as had been spoken in a private capacity to individuals,—such, for example, as had been spoken previous to the commencement of his public ministry, or such as resembled the many inspired but merely oral messages, which the prophets delivered to kings; and they all were contemporaneous with those which were written, and, however varied in language and illustration, contained at least no separate or additional point of faith. They, hence, *were not meant* for the world; οὐδὲ αὐτοὶ οἶμαι τοῖς κόσμῳ χωρεῖσαι τὰ γραφομένα βιβλία. 'I think that the world could not receive,' owing to their not being adapted to it, 'the books which should be written.' Οὐ χωρεῖν has clearly the sense of not receiving in consequence of non-adaptation. 'His disciples say unto him, If the case of a man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying,' οὐ παντὶς χωρεῖται τοῦ

λογον τούτων, 'but they to whom it is given: for there are some eunuchs,' &c., Matth. xix. 10—12. 'The world could not receive the books,' strictly means, therefore, 'the books should not be fitted or adapted for the world;'—the sayings which they should record were either so personal to the individuals to whom they were spoken, or so limited in range, compared with sayings of the same import which are recorded, as to be unsuited to the general or varied capacity of the numerous class of readers. If, too, they could not, on account of their number and bulkiness, be committed to writing, they could still less be gathered and handed down by tradition. As to the particular saying, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' though not found in the gospels, it is found in scripture; and it can be made a warrant for receiving other alleged sayings of Christ, only on the supposition that they too have been recorded by inspiration. The argument, view it as we may, *disproves* the doctrine of tradition, and affirms the sole authority of the written word.—ED.]

[NOTE L. *The Form of Sound Words.*—What the 'form of sound words' was, is not stated by Dr. Ridgeley. It is made to mean 'tradition' by Romanists, and 'a formal creed,' by the advocates of fixed human standards of faith. Another passage which speaks of 'a form,'—a 'form of doctrine,' and which also the Romanists quote as a sanction to tradition, contains decided evidence as to what the form was: 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you,' Rom. vi. 17. 'This passage, rightly translated, reads: 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that mould of doctrine into which ye were cast, or delivered.' The word *τυπος* means such a mould or die as imparts shape and impression to melted metal; and, as occurring in the phrase *εις ὃν παρέδοθης τυπον διδασκας*, it describes the gospel, or those truths which had been believed by the Christian converts, as a die into which their hearts had been cast, and which had imparted to them an impress of the image and superscription of God. The word *ὑποτυπώσεις*, as appears from its derivation, and from its conventional use, is analogous. Timothy had received 'a moulding of sound words': he had learned from scripture, and heard from the apostle Paul, doctrines which made distinct delineations on the mind, and stamped definite impressions on the heart: he had come in contact with the gospel, not as with a substance which conveyed only confused marks of contact, or no marks whatever, but as with one which impressed 'a moulding,' a legible representation, a well-delineated picture or plan of excellence on the character. How different is this 'moulding of sound words' from the idea either of a formal creed, or of authoritative oral tradition!

'That which was committed to Timothy's trust,' is simply the opposite of 'profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called.' Paul reminds him that he had 'professed a good profession before many witnesses;' he bids him 'fight the good fight of faith,' and charges him to 'keep this commandment without spot,' 1 Tim. vi. 12, 14; and now, in opposition to profane and vain babblings, and the illusions of false philosophy, he enjoins him to hold fast what he had professed, and continue trustworthy in contending for the truth.—ED.]

[NOTE M. *Paul's Traditions to the Thessalonians.*—Dr. Ridgeley arbitrarily distinguishes, as to their authority, between Paul's written doctrines, and those of his public ministry. Paul himself does not distinguish between them, but enjoins obedience to both in the same language, and applies to both the same epithet. The things which he had written, and the things which he had preached, were 'traditions;' they were matters 'delivered' to the Thessalonians for the guidance of their faith, but they were 'traditions' they were 'delivered,' simply as conveyed from the writer to the reader, or from the speaker to the hearer, not as received from some one anterior to Paul, or as committed to the Thessalonians for transmission to future ages, apart from the canon of revelation.

The apostles, in the first instance, all orally taught the same things which five of their number, and three evangelists, afterwards committed to writing. Paul, in the particular case before us, communicated his doctrines to the Thessalonians, first by his personal ministry, and next by epistle; and he 'taught' them equally by what he spoke and by what he wrote. Till the canon of scripture was completed, his discourses were of the same authority as the written word; and they contained just the same matter which became embodied in the apostolic scriptures. He had as yet written none of his epistles, except the first to the Thessalonians; he was now writing his second epistle, and addressing it to the same people; he uses the phrase 'our epistle,' literally, and with emphasis; and, aware how many doctrines and facts of the new dispensation remained yet to be penned, he enjoins attention equally to the portion of truth which he had taught in person, and to that which he had communicated by letter. As yet there was need for the oral teaching of the apostles. All those facts, and doctrines, and illustrations of the new economy, which were afterwards placed fixedly before the world in the epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, to the Corinthians, to the Hebrews, and, in other books of the apostolic scriptures, were taught as yet only by oral communication; and, being essential to the edification of believers and the extension of Christianity, they demanded for 'the word' of Paul, or of any of his inspired fellow-labourers, the same deference which was claimed for his 'epistle,'—for the commencing, and as yet the only portion of his large contribution to the canon of the new dispensation. Such were the 'traditions' which had been delivered to the Thessalonians by 'word': they were in perfect harmony with the 'traditions by epistle,' and, in all respects, identical with what is now exhibited in the completed scriptures.

A chief topic of the oral traditions contended for by the church of Rome is, according to Bellarmine, the character and coming of antichrist. Now this topic is discussed at considerable length in the very epistle in which Paul commands attention to his traditions; and it was afterwards fully developed, and held up to view in all its details, in the first epistle to Timothy, in the first epistle of John, and in the book of Revelation.—ED.]

[NOTE N. *Arguments against Tradition.*—Dr. Ridgeley contents himself with simply repelling the Romish arguments in favour of the authority of traditions. He might, however, have easily adduced many arguments on the other side. The Jewish traditions were condemned by Christ, Matt. xv. 2—9; Mark vii. 5—14.—All traditions which are not echoes of the written word are condemned by the apostles, Col. ii. 8, 18—23; Gal. i. 14; Tit. i. 14; 1 Cor. i. 6.—Necessary



traditions, or oral apostolic instructions, were so ineffective previous to the completion of scripture, that, on such important topics as justification, the obligation of the ceremonial law, the right observance of the eucharist, and the proper use of supernatural gifts, they required to be promptly corrected, and displaced by written revelation, Gal. iii. 1—6; 1 Cor. vii. xi. xiv; Eph. iv. 14; Rom. xvi. 17; Phil. i. 27; iii. 2.—Traditions, even with the help of a race of prophets, and of frequent revelation, were inefficient in the ante-Mosaic age; and, on the simplest topics of moral duty, as well as on matters of doctrine and worship, were necessarily supplanted by a written rule of faith.—Though the Jews, like the Romanists, pretended to both a written and an unwritten revelation, our Lord and his apostles, in all their reasonings with them, appealed only to the scriptures, John v. 39, 46, 47; Matt. xv. 3, 9.—Traditions, as contended for by Romanists, nowhere exist,—are not contained in any depository,—and, in any emergency, or for any purpose of appeal, cannot be found.—Though the Church of Rome had possessed traditions, she cannot be trusted for preserving them; for she can give no traditionary expositions of theological or textual difficulties,—she has been unable, as is proved by the enormous discrepancies between the Vulgate of Sixtus V. and that of Clement VIII., to preserve even the text of her adopted translation of the scriptures,—she has rejected undoubted traditions of early times, such as the threefold application of water in baptism, and the giving of the eucharist to infants,—she has maintained the authority of forged documents, such as the Decretals, the Donation of Constantine, and pseudo-decrees of the first council of Nice,—she has widely deputed from some universally-received and orthodox doctrines of the catholic church of the early centuries, as on the subjects of purgatory, indulgences, half-communion, and the canon of scripture,—and she has altered and varied her pretended traditions, according to her caprice, or in order to suit the shifting tastes of society, as in the changes in her Breviary, and in her doctrines respecting the mass-sacrifice, the number of the sacraments, and the Pope's temporal power.—Ed.]

## THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

**QUESTION. IV.** *How doth it appear that the scriptures are the word of God?*

**ANSWER.** The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers to salvation: but the Spirit of God, bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.

**BEFORE** we proceed to consider the arguments here brought to prove the scriptures to be the word of God, some things may be premised [See note O, p. 62] respecting

### *The nature, necessity, and possibility of revelation.*

1. When we speak of the scriptures as divine, we mean more than that they treat of God and divine things, or of his nature and works; for many human uninspired writings, in proportion to the wisdom of their authors, tend to set forth the divine perfections. And when we assert that every thing contained in the scriptures is infallibly true, we do not deny that there are many things which we receive from human testimony, of the truth of which it would be scepticism to entertain the least doubt. When we receive a truth from human testimony, however, we judge of it by the credibility of the evidence, and, in proportion to this, we fix the degree of certainty which belongs to it. But when we suppose a truth to be divine, we have the highest degree of certainty respecting it, simply because it is the word of him that cannot lie. Thus we consider the holy scriptures as of divine origin, or given by the inspiration of God; or as his revealed will, designed to bind the consciences of men. And we regard the penmen, not as the inventors of them, but only as the instruments made use of to convey them to us. Hence the apostle Peter says, 'Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;'<sup>k</sup> and the apostle Paul says, 'I certify unto you, that the gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man; neither received I it of man; neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.'<sup>l</sup> The former asserts inspiration concerning scripture in general; and the latter asserts it concerning that part which was transmitted to us by him. Such is what we mean when we say the scripture is the word of God.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. i. 21.

<sup>l</sup> Gal. i. 11, 12.



2. It is necessary for us to know and believe the scriptures to be the word of God. They are to be received by us as a rule of faith and obedience in whatever respects divine things; and if we do not believe them to be the word of God, we are destitute of a rule, and our religion must be a matter of the greatest uncertainty. And as faith and obedience are a branch of religious worship, they involve an entire subjection to God, a firm and unshaken assent to whatever he reveals as true, and a readiness to obey whatever he commands, as being influenced by his authority,—all of which are inconsistent with any hesitation or doubt as to the divine origin of scripture. Moreover, it is only in the scriptures that we have an account of the way in which sinners may have access to God, the terms of their finding acceptance in his sight, and all the promises of eternal blessedness on which their hope is founded; and if we are not certain that the scriptures are the word of God, our faith and hope are vain. It is in the scriptures that ‘life and immortality are brought to light,’<sup>m</sup> and by ‘searching them, we think that we have eternal life.’<sup>n</sup>

3. Divine revelation is necessary; and it is not impossible, or contrary to reason or the divine perfections, for God to impart his mind and will to men in the way we call inspiration. These points must be made apparent, else it is vain to attempt to give arguments to prove the scriptures to be the word of God. And,

That divine revelation is necessary, appears from this:—as religion is necessary, so there are some things contained in it which cannot be known by the light of nature, namely, all those divine laws and institutions which are the result of God’s arbitrary will; and as these cannot be known by the light of nature, or in a way of reasoning derived from it, they must be known by special revelation. Positive laws, as opposed to those that are moral, rest on a different foundation from the latter; and the glory of God’s sovereignty eminently appears in the one, as that of his holiness doth in the other. Now his sovereign pleasure relating to his positive laws could never have been known without divine revelation; and then all that revenue of glory, which is brought to him by them, would have been entirely lost, and there would have been no instituted worship in the world. The gospel, also, which is called ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ,’<sup>o</sup> must have been for ever a hidden thing; and the condition of those who bear the Christian name would have been no better than that of the heathen,—concerning whose devotion, the apostle Paul, though speaking of the wisest and best of them, says, they ‘ignorantly worshipped an unknown God,’<sup>p</sup> and ‘the world by wisdom knew not God.’<sup>q</sup> And the reason is, that they were destitute of divine revelation.

It is not impossible or contrary to reason or the divine perfections, that God should reveal his mind and will to man. If it is possible for one creature to impart his mind and will to another, certainly God can do this; for there is no excellency or perfection in the creature but what is eminently in him. And if it be not unworthy of the divine majesty to be omnipresent, and to uphold all things by the word of his power, it is not unbecoming his perfections to manifest himself to intelligent creatures, who, as such, are fit to receive the discoveries of his mind and will. His endowing them with faculties capable of receiving these manifestations, also argues, that he designed that they should be favoured with them. Whatever displays, therefore, there may be of infinite condescension in the work of revealing his character and will, yet it is not unbecoming his perfections to perform it. And as God cannot be at a loss for an expedient how to discover his mind and will to man, and is not confined to one certain way; so he may, if he pleases, make it known by inspiration. Nor is there any thing in the subject that should hinder him from impressing on the minds of men whatever ideas he designs to impart. That even a finite spirit can make impressions on the mind, will hardly be denied by any but those who, with the Sadducees, deny the nature and power of spirits. It follows that God can much more impress the souls of men, or immediately communicate his mind to them, in the way we call inspiration. To deny that there is such a thing as inspiration, is not only to deny the credibility of scripture-history, as well as its divine authority, but it is to deny that which the heathen, by the light of nature, have universally believed to be consonant to rea-

son; for they often represent their gods as conversing with men, and appear, in many of their writings, not to have the least doubt whether there has been such a thing as inspiration.

*Proofs that the scriptures are inspired.*

We are now to consider those arguments which are brought to prove the scriptures to be the word of God, or that they were given by divine inspiration. These are of the nature either of internal evidence, taken from the subject-matter of scripture, the majesty of the style, the purity of the doctrines, the harmony or consent of all the parts, and the scope or tendency of the whole to give all glory to God; or else of external, taken from the testimony which God himself gave to inspiration, at first by miracles, whereby the mission of the prophets, and consequently what they were sent to deliver, was confirmed, and afterwards, in succeeding ages, by the use which he hath made of scripture in convincing and converting sinners, and building up believers to salvation. These are the arguments mentioned in this answer, and shall be distinctly considered. Some others also shall be added. One shall be taken from the character of the inspired writers, that they were holy men, and so would not impose on the world, or pretend themselves to have been inspired, if they were not,—that they were plain and honest men, void of all craft and subtilty, and so could not impose on the world,—and that even had they attempted any imposture, they had a great many subtle and malicious enemies, who would soon have detected it. Another argument shall be taken from the sublimity of the doctrine; in which respect it is too great, and has too much wisdom in it, to have been invented by men. Others shall be taken from the antiquity of scripture, together with its wonderful preservation, notwithstanding all the endeavours of its enemies to root it out of the world. We shall then consider how far the testimony of the church is to be regarded, not as though it contained the principal foundation of our faith, as the papists suppose, but as an evidence additional to those that have been before given. And finally, we shall speak something concerning the witness of the Spirit with the scripture in the heart of man, which inclines him to be persuaded by, and to rest in, the other arguments brought to support the truth of inspiration. And if all these be taken together, they will, we hope, beget a full conviction in the minds of men, that the scriptures are the word of God.

I. The majesty of the style in which scripture is written. This argument does not hold equally good with respect to all the parts of scripture; for there are, in many places, a great plainness of speech and familiarity of expression adapted to the meanest capacity, and sometimes a bare relation of things, without that majesty of expression which we find in other places. Thus, in the historical books, we do not observe such a loftiness of style, as in Job, Psalms, Isaiah, and some others of the prophets;—although there are arguments of another nature to prove them to be of divine authority. We may, however, observe such expressions as set forth the sovereignty and greatness of God, interspersed with almost the whole scripture; as when he is represented speaking in a majestic way, tending not only to bespeak attention, but to strike those that hear or read with a reverential fear of his divine perfections. Thus when he gives a summons to the whole creation to give ear to his words, ‘Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken;’<sup>r</sup> or swears by himself, that ‘unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear;’<sup>s</sup> or when it is said, ‘Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool;’<sup>t</sup> and elsewhere, ‘The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him; his lightnings enlightened the world. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth;’<sup>u</sup> and when he is represented as casting contempt on all the great men of this world, and is said to ‘cut off the spirit of princes, and to be terrible to the kings of the earth,’<sup>x</sup> and to ‘charge’ even ‘his angels with folly;’<sup>y</sup> or when

<sup>r</sup> Isa. i. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. xlv. 23.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. lxvi. 1.

<sup>u</sup> Psal. cxvii. 1—5.

<sup>x</sup> Psal. lxxvi. 12.

<sup>y</sup> Job iv. 18.



the prophet speaks of him, as He who had 'measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance;' before whom 'the nations of the earth are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; yea, as nothing, less than nothing and vanity.'<sup>z</sup> It would be almost endless to refer to the many places of scripture, in which God speaks in such a style as is inimitable by any creature. Of this we have several instances in the book of Job, especially in those chapters where he is represented as answering Job out of the whirlwind,<sup>a</sup> and where expressions are used which, if not immediately from God, could proceed only from the most bold presumption in any creature, and which, therefore, argue the style to be divine, great, and magnificent. The argument taken from the majestic style of scripture, is not without its proper weight; and it may serve to prepare us for those other arguments, which, together with this, evince the divine origin of scripture.

II. The divine authority of scripture appears from the purity of its doctrines. The argument from this holds good, whether we consider the scripture absolutely, or compare it with other writings. It will appear, by its purity, not only to excel all other compositions, but to be truly divine, and to be deservedly styled the 'Holy Scripture.'<sup>b</sup> The words of it are 'pure as silver tried in a furnace, purified seven times';<sup>c</sup> and it speaks of 'right things in which there is nothing froward or perverse.'<sup>d</sup> Every one that weighs the subject-matter of it may behold therein the displays of the glory of the holiness of God. Let us consider, then, that the word of God appears to be divine from its purity and holiness.

1. As considered absolutely, or in itself. It lays open the vile and detestable nature of sin, to render it abhorred by us. Thus the apostle says, 'I had not known sin,' that is, I had not so fully understood the abominable nature thereof as I do, 'but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet;'<sup>e</sup> and hereupon he concludes, that 'the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' It also presents to our view various instances of the divine vengeance, and shows us how the wrath of God is revealed against the unrighteousness of sinners, to make them afraid of rebelling against him. Thus it gives us an account how the angels fell by rebellion from their first habitation, and are thrust down to hell, being 'reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;'<sup>f</sup> and how man by disobedience lost his primitive integrity and glory, and exposed himself to the wrath and curse of God, and to all the miseries of this life consequent upon these; and how sin has destroyed flourishing nations and rendered them desolate,—how the Jews were first carried into Babylon for their idolatry and other abominations, and afterwards cast off and made the sad monument of the divine wrath, as at this day, for crucifying Christ, persecuting his followers, and opposing the gospel. It also gives an account of the distress and terror of conscience, which wilful and presumptuous sins have exposed particular persons to,—such as Cain, Judas, and others; and it describes these in a very pathetic manner, when it says of the wicked man who has his portion of the good things of this life, that when he comes to die, 'terrors take hold of him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night; the east-wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and hurleth him out of his place; for God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand.'<sup>g</sup> Moreover, the scripture warns sinners of that eternal ruin which they expose themselves to in the other world: 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.'<sup>h</sup> All these things discover the purity and holiness of the word of God. Nor does scripture ever give the least indulgence or dispensation to sin, or, in any of its doctrines, lead to licentiousness. And it not only reproveth sin in the life and outward conversation of men, but also discovers its secret recesses in the heart, where its chief seat is; and obviates and guards against its first motions, tending thereby to regulate the secret thoughts of men,

<sup>z</sup> Isa. xl. 12, 15, 17.  
<sup>d</sup> Prov. viii. 6—8.

<sup>a</sup> Job xxxviii.—xli.  
<sup>e</sup> Rom. vii. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. i. 2.  
<sup>f</sup> Jude 6.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. xii. 6.  
<sup>g</sup> Job xxvii. 20—22.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Thess. i. 9.



and the principle of all their actions, which it requires to be pure and holy. All the blessings and benefits also, which it holds forth, or puts us in mind of, as the peculiar instances of divine favour and love to man, are urged and insisted on as motives to holiness. Thus it is said, 'The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.'<sup>i</sup> And when Moses had been putting the Israelites in mind of God's increasing them 'as the stars of heaven for multitude,'<sup>k</sup> he adds, 'therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge and statutes, his judgments and commandments alway.' And when the loving-kindness of God has been abused by men, scripture severely reproves them for their vile ingratitude; as when it says, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is he not thy father that bought thee? Hath not he made thee, and established thee?'<sup>l</sup> All the examples which it proposes to our imitation are such as savour of, and lead to holiness. When it recommends the actions or conversation of men, it is more especially for the holiness which they discover; and when it describes the conduct of wicked men, together with the dreadful consequences of it, it is that we may avoid and be deterred from the sins which end in their ruin. Again, the rules laid down relating to civil affairs in the Old Testament dispensation, and the behaviour of one man towards another, have a vein of holiness running through them all. The government of the Jewish state, as described in the books of Moses and elsewhere, discovers it to be an holy commonwealth; and the Jews are often called an holy nation, as governed by those laws which God gave them. So the government of the church in the gospel dispensation, is a holy government; visible holiness is a term of church-communion, and apostacy and revolt from God excludes from it. Finally, all the promises contained in scripture are or will be certainly fulfilled, and the blessings it gives us ground to expect, conferred; and therefore it is a faithful word, and consequently pure and holy.

2. If we compare the scripture with other writings, which are of human composition, it plainly excels in holiness. The writings of heathen moralists, such as Seneca, Plato, and others, though they contain a great many good directions for ordering the conduct of men, agreeably to the dictates of nature and right reason, yet, for the most part, allow of or plead for some sins which the scripture mentions with abhorrence, such as revenging injuries and self-murder. These and several other species of moral impurity, were not only practised by those who laid down the best rules to enforce moral virtue, but were either countenanced, or, at least, not sufficiently fenced against, by what is contained in their writings. And their strongest motives to virtue, or the government of the passions, or a generous contempt of the world, are taken principally from the tendency which a virtuous course of life has to free us from those things that tend to debase and afflict the mind, and fill it with uneasiness, when we consider ourselves as acting contrary to the dictates of nature, which we have as intelligent creatures. The scripture, on the other hand, leads us to the practice of Christian virtues from better motives, and considers us not barely as men, but as Christians, under the highest obligations to the blessed Jesus, and constrained to a virtuous life by his condescending love, expressed in all that he has done and suffered for our redemption and salvation. And it puts us upon desiring and hoping for communion with God, through him, in the performance of those evangelical duties which the light of nature knows nothing of; and so discovers a solid foundation for our hope of forgiveness of sin, through his blood, together with peace of conscience and joy resulting from it. It also directs us to look for that life and immortality which is brought to light through the gospel. And in all these respects, it far excels the writings of the best heathen moralists; and so contains in it the visible marks and characters of its divine original.—If, again, we compare the scriptures with writings among Christians which pretend not to inspiration, we shall find in these writings a great number of impure and false doctrines, derogatory to the glory of God. And if men who have the scripture in their hands propagate unholy doctrines, they would do so much more were there no scripture to guide them. Thus the popish doctrines of free-will, the merit of good works, human satisfactions, penances, indulgences and dispensations

<sup>i</sup> Rom. ii. 4.<sup>k</sup> Deut. x. 22. compared with chap. xi. 1.<sup>l</sup> Deut. xxxii. 6.

for sin, are all impure doctrines, which are directly contrary to scripture. And as contraries illustrate each other, so the holiness and purity of scripture which maintains doctrines the opposite of these, will appear to those who impartially study it, and understand its sense.—If, further, we compare the scriptures with the imposture of Mahomet, in the book called the Alcoran, which the Turks make use of as a rule of faith, and reckon truly divine, we shall find that that book contains a system not only of fabulous but of corrupt and impure notions, accommodated to men's sensual inclinations. Thus it allows of polygamy, and many impurities in this world, and promises to its votaries a sensual paradise in the next, all which is contrary to scripture. Compositions merely human, therefore, whether they pretend to divine inspiration or not, discover themselves not to be the word of God by their unholiness; while the scripture manifests itself to be divine by the purity of its doctrine. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise, considering the corruption of man's nature, as well as the darkness and blindness of his mind; in consequence of which, any rule of faith which he might pretend to frame, will be like himself, impure and unholy. Hence that which has such marks of holiness as the scripture has, appears to be inspired by a holy God.

We shall now show the weight of this argument, or how far it may be insisted on to prove the divine authority of scripture. It is to be confessed, that a book's containing holy things, or rules for a holy life, does not of itself prove its divine origin; for then other books might be called the word of God besides the scripture. But this is so called, not only as containing some rules that promote holiness, but as being the fountain of all true religion. And its possessing this character above any book of human composition, affords an argument of some weight to prove it to be of God. 1. Man, who is prone to sin, naturally blinded and prejudiced against divine truth and holiness, could never compose a book which is so consonant to the divine perfections, and contains such a display of God's glory, and is so adapted to make us holy. 2. If we suppose that man could invent a collection of doctrines, which tended to promote holiness, could he invent doctrines so glorious, and so much adapted to this end, as those of scripture are? If he could, he that does this must be either a good or a bad man: if the former, he would never pretend the scripture to be of divine authority, when it was his own composition; and if the latter, it is contrary to his character, as such, to endeavour to promote holiness,—for then Satan's kingdom must be divided against itself. But of this, we shall say more in its proper place, when we come to consider the character of the penmen of scripture, as a further proof of its divine authority. 3. It is plain that the world without scripture, could not attain holiness. The apostle says, 'the world by wisdom knew not God;' <sup>m</sup> and certainly where there is no saving knowledge of God, there is no holiness. And the same apostle gives an account of the great abominations that were committed by the heathen: who, being destitute of scripture light, were 'filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity,' &c. <sup>n</sup> The fact, therefore, that the doctrines contained in the scriptures are not only pure and holy themselves, but tend to promote holiness in us, is not without its proper weight to prove the divine origin of scripture.

III. The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God by the consent or harmony of all their parts. This argument will appear more strong and conclusive, if we compare them with other writings, in which there is but little harmony. Thus, if we consult the writings of most uninspired men, we shall find that their sentiments are often inconsistent or contradictory; and that if, as historians, they pretend to report matters of fact, their evidence or report does not harmonize. This shows that they are fallible; while the exact and harmonious agreement of scripture proves it divine. That merely human compositions agree not among themselves, is very evident; and this is little to be wondered at, if we consider that men are naturally blind and unacquainted with the things of God. As their writings are often inconsistent with the standard of truth, by which they are to be tried, they will hardly be consistent with themselves, much less with one another.



Nothing is more common than for men to betray their weakness, and cast a blemish on their compositions by contradicting themselves; especially if their writings are long, and on various subjects. They are also liable to contradict one another, when any scheme of doctrine is pretended to be laid down by different persons; for when they attempt to represent matters of fact, they often do it in a very different light. This may be especially observed in those accounts that are given of doctrines which are new, or not well known by the world; or in historical accounts, not only of general occurrences, but of particular circumstances attending them,—where, trusting to their memory and judgment, they often impose on themselves and others. The disagreement of human writings is particularly apparent when the authors were men of no great natural wisdom. If especially they lived in different ages, or in places remote from one another, and so could have no opportunity to consult one another or compare their writings together, we shall scarce ever find a perfect harmony or agreement in their writings. Now nothing preserves the books of scripture from such inconsistency and contradiction as are found in all other compositions, except that they were written by divine inspiration. This will appear, if we consider that the penmen were in themselves as liable to mistake as other men. Had they been left to themselves, they would have betrayed as much weakness, confusion, and self-contradiction, as any other writers have done. They might even indeed have betrayed more, inasmuch as many of them had not the advantage of a liberal education, nor were conversant in human learning. But they were taken from mean employments, and made use of by God as penmen of scripture, that we might, in their want of human learning, see more of the divinity of the writings which they were employed to transmit to us. Besides, they lived in different ages and places, and so could not consult together what to impart; and yet we find, as we shall endeavour to prove, that they all agree together. The harmony of their writings, therefore, is an evident proof that they were inspired by the same Spirit, and consequently that these writings are the word of God.

We might here consider the historical parts of scripture, and the account which one inspired writer gives of matters of fact, as agreeing with what is related by another; and also the harmony of all the doctrines contained in them, as agreeing not only in the general scope and design of the writings, but in the way and manner in which they are particularly laid down or explained. But we shall illustrate the harmony of scripture, only by comparing what is foretold in one part with what is related in another as accomplished. There are various predictions relating to the providential dealings of God with his people, which had their accomplishment in an age or two after. Thus the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, foretold the captivity of the Jews, the number of years they should be detained in Babylon, and their deliverance by Cyrus, who is expressly mentioned by name. These prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, are so obvious, that there is no one who reads the Old Testament but will see a harmony between them; so that what in one place is represented as foretold, in another place is spoken of as accomplished in its proper time.<sup>o</sup> And the revolt and apostacy of Israel, their turning aside from God to idolatry, and their falling in consequence into desolation, were foretold by Moses,<sup>p</sup> and by Joshua;<sup>q</sup> and every one that reads the book of Judges will see that the events occurred exactly as they were foretold.<sup>r</sup> And the prophecy of the great reformation which Josiah should make, and in particular, that he should ‘burn the bones’ of the idolatrous priests ‘on the altar at Bethel,’<sup>s</sup> was exactly accomplished above three hundred years after.<sup>t</sup> 2. There are also various predictions under the old testament relating to our Saviour and the new testament church, many of which have had their accomplishment, and others are daily accomplishing. It is said, ‘To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.’<sup>u</sup> And we shall find, that what is foretold concerning him in the Old Testament, is related as accomplished in the New. For example, that he should come in the flesh, was foretold in the Old

<sup>o</sup> Isa. xlv. 28. and chap. xlv. 1—4. compared with Ezra i. 2, 3.

<sup>q</sup> Josh. xxiii. 15, 16. and chap. xxiv. 19.

<sup>r</sup> Judg. ii. 8, 10, 11, 14.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16. <sup>u</sup> Acts x. 43.

<sup>p</sup> Deut. xxxi. 29.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Kings xiii. 2.



Testament,<sup>x</sup> and is mentioned as accomplished in the New.<sup>y</sup> That he should work miracles for the good of mankind, and to confirm his mission, was foretold,<sup>z</sup> and accomplished.<sup>a</sup> That he should live in this world in a low and humbled state, was foretold;<sup>b</sup> and the whole account of his life in the gospels bears witness that the predictions on this subject were fully accomplished. That he should be cut off, and die a violent death, by being lifted up upon the cross, was typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness,<sup>c</sup> and foretold in several other scriptures;<sup>d</sup> and this is largely insisted on, in the New Testament, as fulfilled. That after he had continued some time in a state of humiliation, he should be exalted, was foretold,<sup>e</sup> and fulfilled.<sup>f</sup> That his glory should be proclaimed and published in the preaching of the gospel, was foretold,<sup>g</sup> and fulfilled,<sup>h</sup> as appears from many scriptures. That he should be the spring and fountain of all blessedness to his people, was foretold,<sup>i</sup> and fulfilled.<sup>k</sup> In these, and many other instances, we may observe such a beautiful consent of all the parts of scripture, as proves it to be the very word of God. [See note P. page 69.]

But since it will not be sufficient for supporting the divine authority of scripture, to assert that there is such a harmony as we have observed, unless we can prove that the scripture doth not contradict itself in any instances, we shall next consider the reproach cast upon it by those who would bring all divine revelation into contempt, by alleging that it contradicts itself in several instances, and contains various absurdities, which, were they proved, would enervate the argument we are maintaining. We shall consider some of the alleged contradictions as so many objections against the harmonious consent, and consequently the divine authority, of scripture; and shall add such answers as may be given to each.

There is alleged to be a very great inconsistency between our Saviour's genealogy, as related in the first of Matthew, and in the third of Luke; for one evangelist mentions different persons as his progenitors, from what the other does. For instance, in Matth. i., he is said to be the son of Joseph, and Joseph the son of Jacob, and he the son of Matthan; but Luke says, that he was the son of Joseph, 'which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Matthat.' In like manner, we find the names of each genealogy differing from those of the other, till we come to David. It is alleged, therefore, that both genealogies cannot be true, inasmuch as the one contradicts the other. There is really, however, no contradiction between the two genealogies; for Matthew gives an account of Joseph's ancestors, and Luke of Mary's; and so, both together, prove that he was the son of David, by his reputed father's as well as by his mother's side. And if it be replied, that Luke, as well as Matthew, gives an account of Joseph's genealogy, and that therefore our answer is not sufficient, we may observe, that it is said, 'Jesus was, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,'<sup>1</sup> &c. and that the meaning is, he was indeed the supposed son of Joseph, but was really descended from Heli, the father of the virgin Mary. Nothing is more common in scripture than for grandsons to be called sons; and if we observe the meaning of the Greek words which we render, 'which was the son,' &c. they may be better rendered, 'who descended from Heli;' and then, supposing Heli to be his grandfather, there is not the least absurdity in the passage. There is, therefore, no appearance of contradiction between the two scriptures which contain the genealogy.

It is pretended that there is a contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. and 1 Chron. xxi. 25.; in the former of which passages it said, that David bought the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, to build an altar on, and the oxen for burnt-offerings, that the plague might be stayed, 'for fifty shekels of silver;' while in Chronicles, it is said that 'he gave him for the place six hundred shekels of gold.' Now the facts seem to be these:—David paid Araunah (who is otherwise called Ornan) for his threshing-floor where he built an altar, and for the oxen which ho

x Hag ii. 7. Mal. iii. 1. Isa. ix. 6.

y John i. 14. Gal. iv. 4.

z Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

a Matt. xi. 4, 5. b Isa. lii. 14. and chap. liii. 3.

c Numb. xxi. 9. compared with John iii. 14.

d Isa. lii. 7. and Dan. ix. 26.

e Isa. lii. 13. chap. liii. 11, 12. Psal. lxxviii. 18.

f Acts i. 9. Phil. ii. 9.

g Isa. xi. 10. Psal. cx. 2. Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3.

h 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Mark xvi. 15.

i Gen. xxii. 18. Psal. lxxii. 17. Isa. xlv. 8, 9.

k 2 Cor v. 1. 2. Acts iii. 26.

l Luke iii. 23, 24.

bought for sacrifice, fifty shekels of silver, as is stated in Samuel. But, besides this threshing-floor, he bought the whole place, as is stated in Chronicles, that is, the whole tract of ground, or mountain, on which the threshing-floor stood, and on which he designed that the temple should be built. He therefore saith concerning it, 'This is the house of the Lord God,'<sup>m</sup>—that is, this place, or tract of land, which I have bought round about the threshing-floor, is the place where the house of God shall stand; 'and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel,'—that is, this particular spot where the threshing-floor stands, is where the altar of burnt-offering shall be placed. Now, though he gave for the threshing-floor but fifty shekels of silver,—which probably was as much as it was worth; yet the whole place, containing ground enough for the temple, with all its courts, and the places leading to it, was worth a great deal more, or if there were any houses in the place, these were also purchased to be pulled down, to make room for the temple;—and for all this, he gave six hundred shekels of gold; and we can hardly suppose it to have been worth less. There is, therefore, no real contradiction between these two passages.

It is pretended, that there is a contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. and 1 Chron. xxi. 12; in the former of which Gad, having been sent to David to reprove him for his numbering the people, came to him and said, 'Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?' while, in Chronicles, he speaks of but 'three years of famine.' To reconcile this seeming contradiction, some think that, in some ancient copies, the words are not seven, but 'three years of famine,' in Samuel, as in Chronicles. The reason of this conjecture is, that the LXX., or Greek translation, has the words so; and they think that these translators would hardly have made so bold with scripture, as to put three for seven, and that they found the words as they state them in the copies which they made use of, when they compiled their translation. The best way, however, to account for the seeming contradiction, is this: In Chronicles, Gad bids David choose if he would have three years of famine from that time; but in Samuel he asks if seven years in all of famine should come unto him. There had been three years of famine already, 'for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites:'<sup>n</sup> that famine ceased but the year before; and the ground being so chapped and hard for want of rain this year, which was the fourth, was little better than a year of famine. Now, saith Gad, 'wilt thou have this famine continued three years more, which, in all, makes up seven years?' If we take the two passages in this sense, there is no contradiction between them, though the one speaks of three years, and the other of seven.

Some pretend to find an inconsistency, or absurdity, little better than a contradiction, by comparing 1 Sam. xvi. 21, 22. with chap. xvii. 55. In the former it is said, 'David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer, and he sent to Jesse,' with the intent that he might give him leave 'to stand before him, inasmuch as he had found favour in his sight.' Now, say they, "how can this be consistent with the other scripture; where Saul, seeing David going forth against Goliath the Philistine, asked Abner, 'Whose son is this youth?' and Abner replied, 'He could not tell,' and was ordered to 'inquire who he was,'—how could this ignorance exist, when David had been Saul's armour-bearer, stood before him, and found favour in his sight; and when Saul had sent to Jesse to desire that he might live with him?" I can see no appearance of absurdity, or defect of harmony, between these two scriptures. Supposing Saul's memory had failed him, and he had forgot that David had stood before him as a servant, shall the scripture, that gives an account of this, be reflected on, as containing an inconsistency? It is true, David had stood before Saul, as his armour-bearer; yet he had, for some time, been dismissed from his service, and lived at home where he kept his father's sheep. Probably, too, he had not lived long in Saul's family; and it might be no wonder if Saul had now forgot him. There is no master of a family but may forget what servants have formerly lived with him; and much more a king, who hardly knows the names of the greatest part of the servants that are about him. Besides, David at this time, appeared in the

habit of a shepherd; and on that account Saul might well say, 'Whose son is the youth?' This sufficiently accounts for the difficulty, and vindicates this scripture from the charge of inconsistency. Some, however, account for it by supposing that Saul knew David, as having been his armour-bearer, but did not know his father, and therefore asks, 'Whose son is this?' or who is he that hath so bold and daring a son, as this youth appears to be? If these things be considered, there appears not the least absurdity in this scripture.

Another contradiction which some charge the scripture with, relates to the Israelites, when, pursuant to the advice of Balaam, they committed idolatry, and went a-whoring after the daughters of Moab, and God consumed them for it by the plague. In reference to this the book of Numbers says, 'Those that died in the plague were twenty-four thousand;'<sup>o</sup> but the apostle Paul, referring to the same thing, says, 'Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.'<sup>p</sup> The answer that may be given to this objection, is that the apostle Paul when he says, 'three and twenty thousand died,' or fell, 'in one day,' speaks of those who died by the immediate hand of God, through the pestilential distemper that was sent among them; but took no account of a considerable number more who, for the same sin, died by the hand of public justice. In the passage in Numbers, we read of the 'heads of the people being hanged up before the Lord, and the judges being ordered to slay every man his men that were joined unto Baal-peor,'<sup>q</sup> These died by the sword of justice; and it is no great impropriety to say, that they died in a mediate way, by the plague or sword of God. The sword is one of his plagues, as well as pestilential diseases, and is frequently so styled in scripture. Now, we cannot suppose that fewer died of this latter plague, if that be the import of the word, than a thousand; so that Moses gives the number of all that died, whether by God's immediate hand, or by the sword of the magistrate, pursuant to his command. But if it be reckoned too great a strain upon the sense of the word plague, to give this solution, let it be farther observed, that in the ninth verse, where Moses gives the sum total of those that died, it is not said that they were such as died of the plague, but in the plague;—that is, those who died in or soon after the time that the plague raged among them, whose death was occasioned by this sin, were four and twenty thousand. These two places of scripture, therefore, are so far from contradicting that they rather illustrate each other.

Another pretended contradiction is between Gal. i. 8. and 2 Cor. xi. 4. In the one passage, the apostle says, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;' and in the other he says, 'If he that cometh, preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.' In the former he speaks against those who preach another gospel; in the latter he says they may be borne with,—which seems to be a contradiction. For reconciling the passages, let us consider, that, in the former of them, the apostle pronounces those who preached another gospel accursed, and that therefore they, doubtless, were not to be borne with. And it must be inquired what he means when he says, in the other scripture, that such may be well borne with. Now this scripture will, without the least strain or force upon the words, admit of one of these two senses: 1. It may be considered as containing a sarcasm, by which the apostle reproves the Corinthians for being too much inclined to adhere to false teachers. 'If,' says he, 'these bring you tidings of a better Jesus, a better spirit, a better gospel, then bear with them; but this they cannot do,—therefore reject them.' Or 2. Instead of 'Ye might well bear with him,' the words may be rendered, 'Ye might well bear with me,' as is observed in the marginal reference. The word 'him,' being in an Italic character, is not in the original; and 'me' may as well be supplied as 'him.' The meaning would then be this: "Ye bear with false preachers, are very favourable to them, and seem a little cold to us the apostles; so that I am afraid lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. You can



bear with these false teachers; and will ye not bear with me.' 'Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly, and indeed bear with me.'"<sup>r</sup> It is a sign that religion is at a low ebb, when professors, who are too prone to turn aside to another gospel, are with some difficulty persuaded to bear with those that preach the pure gospel of Christ. Take the words in Corinthians in either of the senses suggested, and they exactly harmonize with the text in Galatians, and do not, as the objectors pretend, contradict it.

Another charge of contradiction brought against scripture is founded on that saying of our Saviour, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.'<sup>s</sup> This, it is alleged, is contrary to Christ's general character, as a 'Prince of peace';<sup>t</sup>—to the advice he gives his disciples, 'not to use the sword,' because such as use it 'shall perish by it';<sup>u</sup>—and to what he saith elsewhere, 'My kingdom is not of this world,'<sup>x</sup> and therefore not to be propagated by might or power, by force or civil policy, or by those other carnal methods by which the kingdoms of this world are advanced and promoted. For reconciling this seeming contradiction, let it be considered that Christ did not come to put a sword into his followers' hands, or to put them upon making war with the powers among whom they dwell, for the propagating of the Christian religion: his gospel was to be advanced by spiritual methods. In this sense, the design of his coming was not to send a sword, but to bring spiritual peace to his people. But when he saith, 'I came to send a sword,' he implies that his coming, his kingdom, and gospel, should occasion persecution and war, by reason of the corruption of men. This the gospel may do, and yet not put men upon disturbing their neighbours, or making war with them; and it is not contrary to Christ's general character of coming to be the author of spiritual peace to his people.

Another pretended contradiction, is between 1 Kings viii. 9. and Heb. ix. 4. In the former it is said, 'There was nothing in the ark but the two tables, which Moses put there;' in the latter, that there 'was the golden pot, that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.' This seeming contradiction may easily be reconciled. We suppose it true that there was nothing in the ark but the two tables, as is stated in the former of these scriptures; and to explain the latter agreeably to it, two senses of it may be given. It is not necessary to suppose, that the apostle means, in *the ark* was the golden pot, &c. but in *the holiest of all*, which he mentions in the foregoing verse. And the meaning is, as in the holiest of all there were the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant, so in the latter were the golden pot and Aaron's rod. But there may be an objection to this sense, from its being said, in the words immediately following, that 'over it were the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat;' where 'it' refers to the ark, and not to the tabernacle or holiest of all. And it may be argued, that if the cherubim were over the ark, then the other things must be supposed to be in it. This objection is not without its force; unless we suppose that the words translated 'over it'<sup>y</sup> may be rendered 'in the higher parts of it,' and the whole clause to be, 'In the higher parts of it,' the holiest of all, 'were the cherubim of glory above the mercy-seat.' The meaning then will be, that, within the second vail, were not only the ark, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, &c. but also the cherubim of glory, which were above them all. But since the grammatical construction seems rather to favour the objection, there is another sense given of the words, which sufficiently reconciles the seeming contradiction, namely:—When it is said, that '*therein*,' or '*in it*,'<sup>z</sup> that is, in the ark, 'was the golden pot that had manna and Aaron's rod that budded,' the meaning is, they were '*near it*,' or '*beside it*,' or some way or other fastened or adjoining to it, in some enclosure in the outside of the ark; while nothing was in it but the two tables. There is therefore no real contradiction between these two scriptures.

Many more instances of pretended contradictions might be stated and satisfactorily refuted; but, instead of noticing them, we choose rather to lay down some general rules for reconciling seeming contradictions in scripture, which may be applied by us in any cases where difficulties occur. And,

r Verse 1.    s Matt. x. 34.    t Isa. ix. 6.    u Matt. xxvi. 52.    x John xviii. 36.  
y Ταρταν αυτης.    z [εφ' ην] is oftentimes signifies, cum, ad, prope, juxta, as well as in.

1. A seeming contradiction sometimes arises from the inadvertency of some who have transcribed the copies of scripture, in putting one word for another ;—though this is not often the case ; for great care has been taken in transcribing the manuscripts of scripture, even greater, perhaps, than in transcribing any manuscripts whatever. The mistakes in transcribing are few, and occur only where there is such a likeness between two words that one might easily be mistaken for the other. And this ought not to prejudice any against the scripture ; for it only argues, that though the inspired penmen were infallible, the scribes that took copies of scripture for common use were not so. When there is any mistake, it may generally be rectified by some other copy, that has the word as it really should be. So in some editions of our printed bibles, we find mistakes as to some words, which may be rectified by others which are more correct. And if so, why may not mistakes be supposed to be in some written copies of the scriptures, from which printed copies are taken, and which were used before printing, which is but a late invention, was known in the world ?

2. When the same action in scripture seems to be ascribed to different persons, or the same thing said to be done in different places, there is no contradiction ; for the same person, or place, is sometimes called by various names. Thus Moses' father-in-law, who met him in the wilderness, and advised him in settling the government of the people, is called, in one place, Jethro,<sup>a</sup> and in another, Hobab ;<sup>b</sup> and the mountain from which God gave the law to Israel is sometimes called Sinai,<sup>c</sup> and at other times Horeb.<sup>d</sup>

3. Chronological difficulties, or such seeming contradictions as arise from a difference of computation as to the time in which any thing is said to have been done, may be reconciled by referring to different epochs or dates of computation. It is said, for example, that the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years ;<sup>e</sup> but when God foretells this sojourning, he says, 'Thy seed shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.'<sup>f</sup> Now the four hundred and thirty years take their beginning of computation from Abraham's being called to leave his country, and sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange land. But the four hundred years take their beginning of computation from his having the promised seed, or from the birth of Isaac,—which happened twenty-five years after his leaving his country. From that time till the children of Israel's going out of Egypt was four hundred and five years, and the five years above four hundred are left out, as being an inconsiderable number. In the same way, our common method of computing time, when a large even number is mentioned, leaves out a small one of four or five years, more or less, as in the instance here mentioned ; especially when time is expressed by centuries, as it is here ; for it is said, in verse 16, 'In the fourth generation,' that is, after the fourth century of years, 'they shall come hither again.'

4. When, by comparing the years of the reign of any of the kings of Judah or of Israel, as mentioned in the books of Kings and of Chronicles, we find that he is said, in one of these books, to have reigned three or four years longer than according to the account given in the other, the seeming contradiction may be reconciled, by considering him as having begun to reign before his father's death, as Solomon did before David died, or as having been nominated his father's successor, and owned as such by the people, which was sometimes done to prevent disputes that might afterwards arise. Sometimes, too, when a king was engaged in foreign wars, which obliged him to be absent from his people, and the event of which was uncertain, he appointed his son to reign in his absence ; from which time the latter had the title of a king, though his father was living. Or when a king was superannuated, or unfit to reign, as Uzziah was when smote with leprosy,—or when he was weary of the fatigue and burden of government,—he would settle his son, as his viceroy, in his life-time ; on which account the son is sometimes said to reign with his father. Thus many account for the difficulty respecting Jehoiachin, who, in 2 Chron. xxxvi.

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xviii. 1.<sup>b</sup> Numb. x. 29.<sup>c</sup> Exod. xix. 20.<sup>d</sup> Deut. i. 6.<sup>e</sup> Exod. xii. 40.<sup>f</sup> Gen. xv. 13.



9, is said to have been 'eight years old when he began to reign,' while in 2 Kings xxiv. 8. he is said to have been 'eighteen years old when he began to reign.' The meaning is, that when he was eight years old he was nominated as his father's successor; but when he was eighteen years old he began to reign alone, his father being then dead.

5. Scriptures that seem to contradict one another may not, as to their general design, treat of the same but of different subjects. Thus the seeming contradiction between the apostles Paul and James, is to be accounted for. The former says, 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ;'<sup>n</sup> but the latter says, 'By works a man is justified, and not by faith only.'<sup>o</sup> The apostle Paul speaks of a sinner's justification, or freedom from the condemning sentence of the law in the sight of God. This justification gives him a right to eternal life; and he looks for it out of himself, and, by faith, depends alone on Christ's righteousness for obtaining it. In this sense, works do not justify. But when the apostle James asserts, that 'a man is justified by works, and not by faith only,' he means that our profession of faith and sincerity in it are justified, that is evidenced, not by our having just notions of things, or an historical faith, such as the devils themselves have, but by those works of holiness which are the fruits of faith. This is the only justification he treats of, and he therefore does not in the least contradict the apostle Paul, who treats of another kind of justification, in which works are excluded. [See note Q, page 69.]

6. When two scriptures seem to contradict each other, they may sometimes be reconciled by considering the same thing absolutely in one place, and comparatively in the other. Thus, in many scriptures, we are commanded to extend that love to every one in their several relations, which is due; and yet our Saviour says, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple.'<sup>p</sup> This is to be understood comparatively; that is, our love to the creature ought to bear no proportion to that which is due to God.

7. Scriptures that seem to contradict one another, often speak of different persons, or persons of different characters. Thus the commands, 'Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful';<sup>q</sup> and 'Judge not, that ye be not judged,'<sup>r</sup> respect persons in a private capacity; and do not contradict scriptures which are applied to magistrates in the execution of public justice, and which say to them, 'Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.'<sup>s</sup> [See note R, page 69.]

8. Two contrary assertions may be both true in different respects. Our Saviour says in one place, 'The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always';<sup>t</sup> and in another, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'<sup>u</sup> These statements are both true; the one having reference to Christ's bodily presence as man, in which respect he is not now with us; the other, to his spiritual and powerful influences, whereby he is always present with his people as God.

9. We must take notice of different times or dispensations. Laws or ordinances, which were to be received and observed as a rule of faith and duty at one time, may not be so at another. Thus circumcision is recommended as a duty and a privilege to the Jews before Christ's time, in which respect the apostle reckons it among the advantages which they formerly had above all other nations;<sup>x</sup> but when the gospel dispensation was erected, and the Jewish economy abolished, it was so far from being an advantage, that the observance of it was deemed no less than a subversion of the gospel. Hence the apostle says, 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.'<sup>y</sup> The same apostle also gives a very diminutive character of these institutes of the ceremonial law, and calls them 'weak and beggarly elements,' such as had a tendency to bring the converted Jews again into bondage; and he blames them for observing the Jewish festivals, such as, 'days,

<sup>n</sup> Gal. ii. 16.  
<sup>r</sup> Matth. vii. 1.

<sup>o</sup> James ii. 24.  
<sup>s</sup> Deut. xix. 21.  
<sup>x</sup> Rom. iii. 1, 2.

<sup>p</sup> Luke xiv. 26.  
<sup>t</sup> Matth. xxvii. 11.  
<sup>y</sup> Gal. v. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. vi. 36.  
<sup>u</sup> Chap. xxviii. 20.



months, times, and years,'—that is, the new moons, feasts of weeks, or of years, such as the seventh year, or the Jubilees; and he tells them, on this occasion, 'I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain.'<sup>z</sup> Thus, then, what was a duty and a privilege in one age of the church, and enjoined with the greatest strictness and the inflicting of the severest punishments on those that neglected it, is forbidden as a sin in another age. There is, therefore, not the least shadow of contradiction between those scriptures which enjoin and those which forbid it. Thus, when our Saviour first sent his twelve disciples to preach the gospel, he commanded them, 'not to go in the way of the Gentiles';<sup>a</sup> that is, not to do so as long as he was upon earth, or till they had finished their ministry among the Jews, to whom the word was first to be preached; but he afterwards, when it was to be spread throughout the world, gave them a commission to 'preach the gospel to all nations.'<sup>b</sup> And this accordingly they did; apprehending there was no contradiction between the former prohibition and the present command.

IV. The divine authority of scripture may be further proved from the scope and design of the whole, which is to give all glory to God. It may be observed concerning the scripture, that the advancing of the divine perfections, and the debasing of the creature, is the great end designed by God in giving it; and we find that whatever doctrine is laid down therein, this end is pursued. Now scripture doctrines are designed to advance the glory of God, either directly or by consequence. As to the former of these methods, the scripture abounds with instances in which God is adored, or set forth as the object of adoration, that is, as having all divine perfections, and as doing every thing becoming himself as a God of glory. Thus he is described as 'the Lord most high and terrible; a great King over all the earth';<sup>c</sup> as 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders';<sup>d</sup> as 'the true God, the living God, and an everlasting King';<sup>e</sup> as 'the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments';<sup>f</sup> and it is also said, 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.'<sup>g</sup> Not only does scripture, as in these passages, occasionally ascribe adorable perfections to God; but every part of it displays his glory in so illustrious a manner, as gives ground to conclude, that the great design of it is to raise in us becoming apprehensions of him, to put us upon adoring and worshipping him as God. It may also, by a just consequence, be said to give all glory to him, when it represents the emptiness and even nothingness of all creatures as compared with him, and thereby recommends him as all in all,—when it speaks of the best of creatures as vailing their faces before him, as acknowledging themselves unworthy to behold his glory, and as deriving all their happiness from him,—when it speaks of man as a sinful guilty creature, expecting all from him, and depending upon him for needful grace,—and when it speaks of God as the author and finisher of faith, in whom alone there is hope of obtaining mercy and forgiveness, grace here, and glory hereafter. Making such representations as these, and laying them down as the sum of all religion, it must certainly be regarded as designing to give all glory to God.

Now, let us consider the force of this argument, or how the general scope and design of scripture, to give all glory to God, proves its divine authority. Had it been the invention and contrivance of men, or had the writers falsely pretended that they had received it by inspiration from God, the great design of it would have been to advance themselves, and they would certainly have laid down in it such a scheme of religion, as is agreeable to the corrupt appetites and inclinations of men, or as would tend to indulge and dispense with sin, and not such an one as sets forth the holiness of God, and his infinite displeasure against it. And as for salvation, the penmen of scripture, had they not been inspired, would certainly have represented it as very easy to be attained, and not as a work of such difficulty as it really is. They would also have propagated such a religion as supposes the

z Chap. iv. 9, 10, 11.  
d Exod. xv. 11.

a Matth. x. 5.  
e Jer. x. 10.

b Chap. xxviii. 19.  
f Dan. ix. 4.

c Psal. xlvii. 2.  
g 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

creature not dependent on, or beholden to God for this salvation ; and then the scripture would have detracted from his glory. Its general design, however, is to give him the glory due to his name ; and this is a convincing evidence of its divine origin. [See note S, page 70.]

From the general design of scripture being to give all glory to God, we may infer that whenever we read the word of God, we ought to have this great design in view. Hence, we should not consider it as merely an historical narrative of things done ; but should observe how the glory of the divine perfections is set forth, in order that we may be induced to ascribe greatness to God, and admire him for all the discoveries which he makes of his character. The scripture's general design should also be a rule to us in the whole of our conversation. Whatever we receive or expect from God, or whatever duty we engage in, let us give all glory to him, and thus act as those who not only take the scripture for our rule, but its general scope and design for our example. And whatsoever doctrines are pretended to be deduced from, or to contain the sense of scripture, which, notwithstanding, tend to depreciate the divine perfections, are to be rejected as contrary to its general scope and design.

V. Another argument for the divine authority of scripture may be taken from the character of the penmen. And here let them be supposed to be either good men or bad. If good men, they could not give themselves a liberty to impose upon the world, and pretend that they received that from God which they did not ; and if they were bad men, they neither could nor would have laid down such doctrines as centre in God, lead the soul to him, and tend to promote self-denial, and to advance his glory in all things. To imagine that wilful impostors fabricated the scriptures, is to suppose, which we can never do, that the worst of men may have the best ends. Our Saviour speaking of false prophets, who were to be known by their fruits, says, ' Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? ' that is, wicked men will have bad designs, or are like the corrupt tree, which bringeth forth evil fruit. But on the other hand, if persons deliver that which carries in it internal evidence of divine truth, and have such a noble design in view as securing the honour of God, and promoting his interest in the world, they must certainly be approved of by him, and concluded to be good men ; and if so, they would not impose a fallacy on the world, or say that the scripture was given by divine inspiration, when it was not.

If the scriptures are not the word of God, the penmen have miserably deceived, not a small number of credulous people, but the whole Christian world ; among whom we must allow that many were judicious, and such as would not easily suffer themselves to be imposed on. Moreover, many to whom the gospel was preached, were exasperated enemies to them that preached it, and particularly to the inspired penmen of scripture, and greatly prejudiced against their doctrine ; and therefore would use all possible endeavours to detect the imposture, if there had been any. It was therefore morally impossible for the penmen to deceive the world by making them believe that the scriptures were the word of God, if there had not been such strong evidence of their being so, as they could not withstand or gainsay.

But that we may enter a little further into the character of the penmen of scripture, let it be observed, that they could not be charged by their enemies with immoral practices, or notorious crimes, which might weaken the credit of the truths they delivered. They were, indeed, compassed about with like infirmities with other men ; for it is not to be supposed, that, because they were inspired, they were perfectly free from sin. Yet their enemies themselves could find no great blemishes in their character, which might raise just prejudice against their writings, or which might render them unfit to be employed in the great work of transmitting the mind of God to the world. They appear, on the contrary, to be men of great integrity, not declining to discover and aggravate their own faults, as well as the sins of others. Thus Moses, though a man of great meekness, as to his general character, discovers his own failing, in repining and being uneasy, because of the untoward and turbulent spirit of the people over whom he was appointed a governor ; and he thus represents himself as complaining to God : ' Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant ? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that



thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? I am not able to bear this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see mine own wretchedness.<sup>k</sup> This was certainly a very great blemish in the character of this excellent man; but he does not attempt to conceal it. Neither does he omit to mention his backwardness to comply with the call of God, to deliver his brethren out of their bondage in Egypt; but tells us what poor trifling excuses he made,—as when he says, ‘O my Lord, I am not eloquent.’<sup>l</sup> And when God answers him, by promising to supply this defect, he obstinately persists in declining the service, and says, ‘O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send,’ that is, by any one but myself. So that, though he expressed such courage and resolution forty years before in defending the oppressed Israelites, and supposed that his brethren would have understood that God, by his hand, would deliver them, but they understood it not;<sup>m</sup> yet when God really called him to deliver them, he obstinately refused to obey. And, indeed, whatever excuses he might make, the main thing that lay at the bottom was fear; and therefore, as a further inducement to it, God tells him that ‘the men were dead that sought his life.’ All this he narrates concerning himself. And elsewhere he tells us,<sup>n</sup> that he did not sanctify the name of God in the eyes of the people, but spake unadvisedly with his lips; and that, for this, God would not let him go into the land of Canaan, though he earnestly desired it. The prophet Jeremiah also tells us respecting himself that he was ready to faint; and, in a murmuring way, he curses the day of his birth,<sup>o</sup> and seems almost determined ‘not to make mention of God, nor speak any more in his name,’ because he had been put in the stocks by Pashur, and was derided and mocked by others,—who were, in fact, below his notice. And David discovered his own sin, though it was a very scandalous one, in the matter of Uriah;<sup>p</sup> and prays, ‘Deliver me from blood-guiltiness,’—words which are a confession of his being guilty of murder. The apostles also discover their infirmities. Thus Paul discovers his furious temper, in persecuting the church before his conversion, and ranks himself among the chief of sinners.<sup>q</sup> And how willing is Matthew to let the world know, that, before his conversion, he was a publican. He characterizes himself as such,<sup>r</sup> and says,<sup>s</sup> that when Christ called him, he ‘sat at the receipt of custom;’—though the publicans were reckoned among the vilest of men for extortion and other crimes, and were universally hated by the Jews. Moreover, as the penmen of scripture expose their own crimes, so they do those of their nearest and dearest friends and relatives, which carnal policy would have inclined them to conceal. Thus Moses relates that Aaron his brother made the golden calf, and so was the encourager and promoter of the people’s idolatry; that it was he who ‘bade them break off the golden earrings, which he received at their hand, whereof he made a molten calf, and then built an altar before it.’<sup>t</sup> The Jewish historian,<sup>u</sup> Josephus, is so politic as, for the honour of his own nation, to conceal this affair; and when he tells us that Moses went up into the mount to receive the law, he says nothing of the scandalous crime which the people were at the same time guilty of at the foot of the mountain. Moreover, as the sacred penmen do not conceal their sins, so they sometimes declare the meanness of their extraction; which shows that they did not design to have honour from men. Thus Amos tells us that he ‘was among the herdmen of Tekoa;’<sup>x</sup> and that he was not bred up in the schools of the prophets,—for this is his meaning when he styles himself, ‘no prophet, neither a prophet’s son.’<sup>y</sup> And the evangelists occasionally tell the world that they were sea-faring men, when Christ called them to be his disciples, and so were not bred up in the schools of learning among the Jews.

k Numb. xi. 11—15.

l Exod. iv. 10, 13, 19.

m Acts vii. 24, 25.

n Deut. xxxii. 51, 52, compared with Numb. xx. 10, 11, 12, and Deut. iii. 25—27.

o Jer. xx. 7, 8, 14—16.

p Psal. li. the title compared with ver. 14.

q 1 Tim. i. 13, 15.

r Matt. x. 3.

s Chap. ix. 9.

t Exod. xxxii. 2—5.

u Vid. Jos. Antiq.

x Amos i. 1.

y Chap. vii. 14.



The penmen of scripture were very far from being crafty or designing men ; neither did they appear to be men that were able to manage such an imposture as a fabrication of the scriptures, or to frame a new scheme of religion, and make the world believe that it was from God. None that read the scriptures can find on the part of the penmen any appearance of design to advance themselves or families. Moses, indeed, had the burden of government ; but he did not affect the pomp and splendour of a king ; neither did he make any provision for his family, so as to advance them to great honours in the world, which it was in his power to have done. The laws he gave rendered those of his own tribe, namely that of Levi, incapable of, and not designed for, kingly government ; and the highest honour of the priesthood, which was fixed in that tribe, was conferred on his brother's children, not on his own. The prophets were very few of them great men in the world, or advanced to great places in government. The esteem and reputation they had among the people at any time, was only for their integrity, and the honour conferred on them by God. The apostles also were plain men, who drove on no design to gain riches and honours from those to whom they preached the gospel. On the other hand, they expected nothing but poverty, reproach, imprisonment, and, at last, to die a violent death. How then can it be supposed that they were subtle designing men, who had some worldly advantage in view ? It is plain that they had no design but to do what God commanded, and to communicate what they had received from him ; and that they shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, whatever it cost them. The apostle Paul was so far from endeavouring to enrich himself by preaching the gospel, that he tells the church, ' I seek not yours, but you.'<sup>2</sup> He foresaw that afflictions would attend his ministry, and stood constantly prepared to meet them. ' I have learned,' says he, ' in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer want.'<sup>2</sup> He was not only content to bear afflictions, but when called to it, he professes himself to ' take pleasure in reproach, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.'<sup>6</sup>

Hitherto we have proved, that the penmen of scripture were men of such a character, that they would not designedly impose on mankind. But some will say, ' Might they not be imposed on themselves, and think they were divinely inspired when they were not ? ' The Deists think them to have been mere fanatics, and esteem their writings no farther than as they contain the law of nature, or those doctrines that are self-evident, or might have been invented by the reason of man ; and as such they receive them, without any regard to divine inspiration. Now if the sacred penmen were deceived or imposed on themselves, when they thought they received the scripture by divine inspiration, either they took what was the result of a heated fancy, of a strong imagination, or of raised affections, for inspiration, as some of our modern enthusiasts have done, who have prefaced their warnings, as they call them, with, ' Thus saith the Lord,' &c., when the Lord did not speak by them ; or they were imposed on by a diabolic inspiration,—of which, in other cases, the world has had various instances, when Satan is said to have ' transformed himself into an angel of light,'<sup>c</sup> or has been suffered to deceive his followers, not only by putting forth ' signs and lying wonders,' but by impressing their minds with ' strong delusions,' whereby they have ' believed a lie,'<sup>d</sup> as supposing themselves to be inspired, and, to give countenance thereto, has produced such violent agitations, tremblings, or distortions in their bodies, as have seemed preternatural, not much unlike those with which the heathen oracles were delivered of old, which were called by some a ' divine fury.' We shall show, however, that both parts of this supposition are without any shadow of reason. And as to the first part of it, we assert that the penmen of scripture did not mistake their own fancies for divine revelation. To suppose that they did so, is not only to conclude that all revealed religion is a delusion, but that the church in all ages, and amongst them the wisest and best of men, have been enthusiasts, and that all their hope, founded on this revelation, has been no better than a vain dream. But it is one thing to assert, and another thing to prove ; and because they who take this liberty to reproach the

scriptures, pretend not to support their charge by argument, it might seem less necessary to make a reply. Yet that our faith may be established, we shall briefly consider their objection. Now this charge is either brought against all that ever spake or wrote by divine inspiration, or only against some of them. If only some of them have been deluded, we might demand particular instances of any of the inspired writers, who are liable to this charge, together with the reasons of their being so. If it be said that some of them were men of less wisdom, or had fewer advantages to improve their natural abilities, than others; we reply that God can make use of what instruments he pleases, and endow them with wisdom in an extraordinary way to qualify them for the service he calls them to, whereby the glory of his sovereignty more appears. If he pleases to choose 'the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence,'<sup>e</sup> shall he for this be called to an account by vain man? And it is certain that some who have had the gift of inspiration, have, in consequence of it, been endowed with such wisdom as has tended to confound their most malicious enemies. But we will suppose that they who bring the charge of delusion against the inspired writers, do not single out any among them, but accuse them all of enthusiasm. If this charge be grounded on the vain pretensions of some to inspiration in this age, in which we have no ground to expect this divine gift, will it follow, that divine revelation, supported by incontestable evidence, was a delusion? Or if it be said that some of old, whom we conclude to have been inspired, were called enthusiasts, as Elisha the prophet was by Jehu and his fellow-soldiers,<sup>f</sup> nothing can be inferred from this, but that there were in all ages some Deists, who have treated things sacred with reproach and ridicule. But if anything that has the least appearance of an argument be brought to support the charge of delusion, it will be this, that it is impossible for a person at any time certainly to know himself to be inspired. If this could be proved, it would be something to the purpose. And as we are obliged to assert the contrary, it will be demanded how it might be known that a person was under inspiration, or what are the certain marks by which we may conclude that the inspired writers were not mistaken in this matter.

I confess, it is somewhat difficult to determine this question, especially since inspiration has so long ceased in the world; but we shall endeavour to answer it, by laying down the following propositions. 1. If some powerful and impressive influences of the Spirit of God on the souls of men, in the more common and ordinary methods of divine providence and grace, have been not only experienced, but their truth and reality discerned by those who have been favoured with them, so that, without pretending to inspiration, they had sufficient reason to conclude that they were divine; certainly when God was pleased to converse with men in the way which we call inspiration, it was not impossible for those who enjoyed the converse to conclude that they were inspired. 2. There were some particular instances, in which it seemed absolutely necessary, that they who received intimations from God in a supernatural way, should have infallible evidence that they were not mistaken; as when, pursuant to a divine command, some great duty was to be performed by them in which it would be a dangerous thing for them to be deceived. Such was the case of Abraham's offering up his son. Such also was Jacob's going with his family into Egypt; which was a forsaking of the promised land, an exposing of them to the loss of their religion, through the influence or example of those with whom they went to sojourn. And as it might be uncertain whether they should ever return or not, he needed a divine warrant, inquired of God as to what was his duty, and doubtless had some way to be infallibly assured of the divine will concerning it.<sup>g</sup> Moreover, our Saviour's disciples leaving their families, and going into the most remote parts of the world to propagate the gospel, which they believed themselves to have received in a supernatural way, evinces the necessity of their knowing themselves to be under a divine inspiration. And if they had been deceived, would they not have been reprov'd by Him whose intimations they are supposed to have followed in the simplicity of their hearts? 3. There are various ways that might have been, and probably were, taken to convince the sacred penmen, beyond



all manner of doubt, that God spake to them by inspiration. Sometimes extraordinary impressions were made on the soul of the prophet arising from the immediate access of God to it. Of this we have frequent instances in scripture; as in the vision of Daniel which occasioned his 'comeliness to be turned into corruption, and his having no strength;'<sup>b</sup> and in the vision which John saw of our Saviour, the effect of which was his falling at his feet as dead.<sup>i</sup> Many other instances of the like impressions might be referred to, which were the result of the access of God to the soul, and which occasioned such a change in nature as could not but be discerned after the person had a little recovered himself. But if it be said that such impressions might be produced by an infernal spirit, I answer that, supposing this possible, it must be proved that God would suffer it,—especially in an instance in which his own cause was so much concerned. Besides, it is not improbable that the soul of the prophet was sometimes brought into such a frame as resembled the heavenly state, as much as is possible for any one to attain to in this world. The experience of this made Jacob say, 'This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'<sup>k</sup> Again, it is not improbable that God might work miracles of various kinds, to confirm the prophet's belief as to his being inspired; though they are not particularly recorded in all the instances in which we read of inspiration. If it be objected, that it is not probable that miracles were always wrought to give this conviction, I would not be too peremptory in asserting the contrary, and would deem it sufficient to say that they were sometimes wrought. But doubtless there were some other concurring circumstances, which put conviction of inspiration out of all dispute; for not to suppose this, is to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God, as well as to depreciate one of the greatest honours which he has been pleased to confer upon men. Thus we have considered the unreasonableness of the charge brought against the inspired penmen of scripture, that they were imposed on by mistaking enthusiastic fancies for divine revelation. [See Note T, p. 71.]

We shall now show that they were not imposed upon by the devil, or did not mistake impressions made by him on their minds, for divine revelation. Divine inspiration was not occasional, or conferred in some particular instances, with a design to amuse men, or to confirm some doctrines which were altogether new, impure, and subversive of the divine glory in some ages of the world when men were universally degenerate, and had cast off God and religion; but it was continued in the church for many ages, when those for whose benefit it was given evidently appeared to be the peculiar objects of the divine regard. Now, God would never in such circumstances of time and things, have suffered the devil to delude the world, and that to such a degree as be the author of that rule of faith which he himself designed to make use of to propagate his interest, so that his people should be beholden to their grand enemy for those doctrines which were transmitted by inspiration. Satan, besides, would have acted against his own interest, had he inspired men to propagate a religion which has a direct tendency to overthrow his own kingdom; for in that case, as our Saviour observes, 'His kingdom would be divided against itself.'<sup>l</sup> As it is contrary to the wisdom and holiness of God to have suffered the imposition, so Satan would never have done it out of choice, and he has too much subtilty to have done it through mistake. The inspired writers, therefore, could not be imposed on by any infernal spirit. And we may add, that no delusion could have been practised by a good angel; for if such an one had pretended in the matter of inspiration, to have imitated, or, as it were, usurped the throne of God, he would not have deserved the character of a good angel. It follows, therefore, that the sacred penmen could not have been inspired by any but God himself.

Having considered that the penmen of scripture have faithfully transmitted to us what they received by divine inspiration, we must now take notice of an allegation meant not only to depreciate but to overthrow the divine authority of their writings, that they were inspired as to only the substance or general idea of what they committed to writing, and were left to express this in their own words. Hence, it is alleged, there arose some contradictions occasioned by the treachery of their

h Dan. x. 8.

i Rev. i. 17.

k Gen. xxviii. 17.

l Matt. xii. 25, 26.



memories, or the unfitness of their style to express what had been communicated to them. This allegation is founded on the difference of style observed in the various books of scripture; some of which are written in an elegant and lofty style, others clouded with mystical and dark expressions,—some more plain, others laid down in an argumentative way. These different modes of writing are supposed agreeable to the character of the several inspired writers; so that, though the matter of scripture contains something divine, the words and phrases can hardly be reckoned to do so. As for some books of scripture, especially those that are historical, it is alleged that these might be written without inspiration, and that some of them were taken from histories which were previously in being, or from occurrences which were observed in the days in which the writers lived, and which were generally known and believed at the time when they took place. [See Note U, page 72.] And as for those books of scripture, which are more especially doctrinal, it is supposed that there are many mistakes in them, but that these respect only doctrines of less importance, the providence of God having preserved the writer from any gross or notorious blunders, subversive of natural religion; so that, while the scripture may be deemed sufficient to answer its general design of propagating religion in the world, we are not obliged to conclude that it is altogether free from those imperfections which must attend such a kind of inspiration.

If this account of scripture be true, it would hardly deserve to be called the word of God; and we must vindicate it from the aspersions which the account implies.

As to the different styles observed in the various books, it does not follow from them, that the penmen were left to deliver what they received, in their own words. For certainly it was no difficult matter for the Spirit of God to furnish the writers with words as well as matter, and to inspire them to write in a style agreeable to what they used in other cases. If a person should send a message by a child, it is easy to put such words into his mouth as are agreeable to his common way of speaking, without leaving the matter to him to be expressed in his own words. On the same principle, the inspired writers might be furnished by the Holy Ghost with words adapted to that style which they commonly used, without being left to themselves to clothe general ideas with their own words.

As to what is said concerning the historical parts of scripture, that it is not necessary for them to have been transmitted to us by divine inspiration, it may be replied, that these, as well as other parts, 'were written for our learning.'<sup>m</sup> What is excellent in the character of persons, is designed for our imitation,—their blemishes and defects, to humble us under a sense of the universal corruption of human nature,—and the evil consequences of their wicked conduct, to awaken our fears, and warn us against exposing ourselves to such judgments as were inflicted as the punishment of sin. And the account we have of the providential dealings of God with his church, in the various ages of it, is as truly of use as the doctrinal parts of scripture, to put us upon admiring and adoring the divine perfections. It is necessary, therefore, that we have the greatest certainty that the inspired writers have given us a true narration of things, and consequently that the words, as well as the matter, are truly divine.—Some opponents of this doctrine, in order that they may a little palliate these sentiments, allow, as we have seen, that the inspired writers, though left to the weakness of their memory, and the impropriety of their style, were notwithstanding, preserved, by the interposition of divine providence, from committing mistakes in matters of the highest importance. We reply, however, that it will be very difficult for them to assign what doctrines are of greater, and what of less importance, in all the instances in which they occur; or when providence has interposed to prevent the writers from running into mistakes, and when it has not. We should still, therefore, be in uncertainty as to what doctrines are delivered to us as they were received by inspiration, and what are misrepresented by the penmen of scripture; and we should be ready to conclude that, in every section or paragraph, some things may be true, and others false,—some doctrines divine, and others human; and we should, at the same time, have no

certain rule to distinguish the one from the other, and accordingly could not be sure that any part of scripture is the word of God. Such a revelation as the allegation supposes, would thus be of no real service to the church; and our faith would be founded in the wisdom, or rather weakness, of men, and our religion, depending on it, could not be truly divine. [See note V, page 74.]

VI. Another argument, to prove the scriptures to be the word of God, may be taken from their antiquity and wonderful preservation for so many ages. Many other writings, of much later date, have been lost; and nothing more is known of them, than that they once existed. Books were peculiarly liable to be lost, when there were none other than written copies of them, and these procured with much expense and difficulty, and consequently their number small. But the scripture has been preserved, not only against all ordinary accidents, but in spite of all the malice of its avowed enemies, as prompted hereunto by Satan, whose kingdom is overthrown by it. Had it been in his power, he would certainly have utterly abolished and destroyed it. Yet it has been preserved unto this day, and the preservation of it discovers the wonderful hand of providence. Would God have so remarkably taken care of a book, that pretends to advance itself by bearing the character of a divinely inspired writing, if it did not really possess this character?—This leads us to the next argument; which contains evidence more convincing than any other; or which, at least, if added to the arguments already given, will, I hope, make it more abundantly appear that the scriptures are the word of God. The argument is this:

VII. The divine authority of scripture is attested by God himself. And if, in other cases, 'we receive the witness of men,' surely, as the apostle observes, 'the witness of God is greater.'<sup>a</sup> Now the testimony of God to the authority of scripture is twofold; First, extraordinary; Secondly, ordinary. The extraordinary testimony of God is that of miracles. The ordinary is taken from the use which he makes of scripture in convincing and converting sinners, and building believers up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.

As to the extraordinary testimony of God, he has attested the truth of scripture by miracles. A miracle is an extraordinary divine work, whereby something is produced contrary to the common course and laws of nature. Thus the magicians of Egypt confessed, that one of the miracles which Moses wrought was 'the finger of God.'<sup>o</sup> There are many undeniable instances of miracles recorded in scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament; and these being above the power of a creature, and works peculiar to God, they contain a divine testimony to the truth which is confirmed by them. Now when we say that the divine authority of scripture was confirmed by miracles, we mean, that God has wrought miracles to testify his approbation of most of the prophets and apostles who were the inspired writers of it, whereby their mission was declared to be divine. And we cannot think that God, who knows the hearts and secret designs of men, would employ or send any to perform so great and important a work, if he knew them to be disposed to deceive and impose on the world, or that they would, in any instance, call that his word which they did not receive from him. The reason why men sometimes employ unfaithful servants about their work, is that they do not know them,—they never do it out of choice; and we cannot suppose that God, who perfectly knows the hearts of men, would do so. His having not only employed the penmen of scripture as his servants, but confirmed their mission, and testified his approbation of them, by miracles, is, therefore, a ground of conviction to us that they would not have alleged the scriptures to be the word of God if they were not so. And that miracles have been wrought for this end, I think, needs no proof. Not only are we assured of this by the report of those prophets whose mission is supposed to have been confirmed by the miracles; but the fact was universally known and received in the church, in those times in which they were wrought; and it is not pretended to be denied by the most inveterate enemies. That Moses, several of the prophets, our Saviour, and his apostles, wrought miracles, can hardly be reckoned a matter in controversy, for it is a kind of scepticism to deny it. [See



Note W, page 76.] It is certain, also, that in working their miracles they appealed to God for the confirmation of their mission. Elijah, for example, explicitly did this, when he prayed, 'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant; and that I have done all these things at thy word;' <sup>p</sup> and we read, that God answered him accordingly, 'by the fire from heaven consuming the burnt sacrifice,' &c.<sup>q</sup> Such appeals to God, and answers from him, have attained their end, by giving conviction to those for whose instruction the miracles were wrought. When God, through the instrumentality of Elijah, raised the dead child to life, the woman of Zarephath confessed that by this she 'knew that he was a man of God, and that the word of the Lord, in his mouth, was truth.'<sup>r</sup> And it is not denied by the Jews, the most irreconcilable enemies to Christianity, that what is related in the New Testament, concerning the miracles of our Saviour and his apostles, was true in fact. The only thing they deny is, that miracles were a divine testimony, or that they were wrought by the hand of God. And the common reproach which is cast on these miracles is, that they were wrought by magic; just as the Jews of old objected to our Saviour, that 'he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.'<sup>s</sup> But his reply to them was unanswerable,—that this objection would argue 'Satan divided against himself,'—intimating, that Satan would never, to overthrow the Christian religion, use means which he could not but know was more conducive than any other to the establishment of it.

It may be objected, that though miracles were wrought to confirm the mission of several of the prophets, yet none were wrought to confirm the divine authority of the scriptures. It is sufficient, however, if we can prove that God has given his testimony, that he made choice of those prophets to declare his mind and will to the world, that he has accordingly deemed them fit to be credited, and that they were not men liable to any suspicion of carrying on a design to deceive the world; for if God not only calls them holy men, as he does the inspired writers in general, when he says, 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,'<sup>t</sup> but also wrought miracles to prove that they were his servants and messengers, he gives as convincing a testimony as if every part of scripture had been confirmed by a miracle. Besides, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the church which flourished when the various parts of scripture were written, had some extraordinary proofs of their divine authority; since, in many ages miracles were very common. At the same time, too, that the penmen of scripture had the gift of inspiration, others had, what the apostle calls, 'a discerning of spirits,'<sup>u</sup> and were enabled to know whether the prophet who pretended to inspiration, was really inspired. This, to me, seems very probably the sense of the apostle, when he says, 'The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;'<sup>x</sup> for in the context he discourses of prophets speaking by divine revelation, and of others judging of them. [See Note X, page 77.] Now if there was this extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits in the ages in which particular books of scripture were written, the persons who enjoyed it had, from the Holy Spirit himself, a convincing testimony to the inspiration of the prophets and apostles; and by this means the divine authority of scripture was infallibly known to them, and, at the same time, imparted to others for their farther confirmation in this great truth.

It may further be objected, that as we are not now to expect miracles for confirming our faith as to the divine origin of scripture, we cannot be said to have a divine testimony. But the confirming of divine revelation by a constant repetition of miracles is not necessary. God did not design to make the dispensation of miracles too common, or to continue the evidence it affords, when there was no necessity for it. When the Scribes and Pharisees came to our Saviour, desiring to 'see a sign' from him,<sup>y</sup> he would not comply with their unreasonable demand. The apostle Paul takes notice that the Jews generally in his time 'required a sign;'<sup>z</sup> but, instead of complying with their request, he refers them to the success of the gospel, which is 'the

p 1 Kings xviii. 36.

t 2 Pet. i. 21.

z 1 Cor. i. 22.

q Ver. 38.

u 1 Cor. xii. 10.

r 1 Kings xvii. 21—24.

x 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

s Matt. xii. 24.

y Matt. xii. 38.



power of God to salvation,' as the only testimony which was then needful. And our Saviour, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, intimates that the truth of divine revelation has been so well attested, that 'they who believe not Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'<sup>a</sup> Now, since we have such convincing evidence, it is an unreasonable degree of obstinacy to refuse to believe the divine authority of scripture, merely because miracles are not now wrought. To demand farther proof, is no other than a tempting of God, or a disowning that what he has done is sufficient for our conviction; and before we say that for want of the evidence of continued miracles our faith is not founded on a divine testimony, we must be able to prove that it is not founded on such a testimony formerly given. The contrary of this, however, is undeniably evident; for the reality of miracles is confirmed by the confession of the church in all ages. We have, therefore, as much ground to believe the divine authority of scripture, as though miracles were wrought every day for its confirmation. This leads us to inquire,

VIII. How far the testimony of the church is to be regarded as evidence that the scriptures are the word of God. The church has in all ages given its suffrage to the divine origin of scripture, how much soever it has perverted the sense of it. That this argument may be set in a true light, let us consider what the papists say to this matter, when they appeal to the church, to establish the divine authority of scripture; and wherein we differ from them; and how far the testimony of the church is to be regarded as a means for our farther conviction. We are far from asserting, with the papists, that the church's testimony alone is to be regarded, without the internal evidence of scripture; as though it were the principal, if not the only foundation on which our faith is built. If, indeed, they could prove the infallibility of the church, we should more readily conclude the infallibility of its testimony; but all their attempts to prove this are vain and trifling. Moreover, we do not by the word church understand altogether the same thing which they do; for they make it mean a council, convened by him whom they pretend to be the visible head, to decree and establish matters of faith; and so, according to them, a majority of votes of a body of men, every one of whom is liable to error, must determine, and give a divine sanction to, our faith. Nor do we think that those whom they call the fathers of the church, are to be any farther regarded than as they prove what they assert; since there is scarcely any error or absurdity which some one or more of them have not given in to. We also distinguish between the church's testimony, that the scripture was given by divine inspiration, and the sense they give of many of its doctrines. As to the latter, the church has given us ground enough to conclude that its judgment is not much to be depended upon. We find, however, that, in all ages, it has given sufficient testimony to this truth, that the scriptures are the word of God, and that God has proved them to be so by the miracles which he wrought. If God, then, has had a church in the world, or a remnant whom he has preserved faithful, and if their faith, and all their religion, and hope of salvation, have been founded on the truth that the scriptures are the word of God, we cannot altogether refuse to believe that the scriptures are of divine authority. But there is yet another argument which we lay more stress on, namely, the use which God has made of scripture. We remark, therefore, as is farther observed in this answer, that,

IX. The scriptures are proved to be the word of God, by their power to convince and convert sinners, and to comfort and build up believers to salvation. The work of conviction and conversion is, and has been at all times, experienced by those who have had any right or claim to salvation. Not only have various instances of this occurred in all ages; but the very being of the church, which supposes and depends on it, is an undeniable proof of its reality. And as this work is truly divine, so the scriptures have been the principal, if not the only direct means by which it has been brought about. We have never had any other rule, or standard of faith or revealed religion; nor has the work of grace been ever begun, or carried on, in the souls of any, without it. Hence it evidently appears,

that God makes use of scripture to propagate and advance his interest in the world, and that he has given his church ground to expect his presence with it, in all his ordinances. They are obliged, on all occasions, to pay a due regard to scripture; and, in so doing, they have found that God has, by means of it, manifested himself to them, and made them partakers of spiritual privileges, which have been the beginning of their salvation. But it cannot be supposed that God would make this use of his word, and thereby put such an honour upon it, had it been an imposture, or borne the specious but false pretence of being stamped with his authority; for that would be to give countenance to a lie, which is contrary to the holiness of his nature.

Thus we have considered the several arguments, whereby scripture appears to be the word of God. But since multitudes are not convinced by them, we have, in the close of this answer, an account of the means whereby Christians come to a full persuasion as to this matter,—and that is the testimony of the Spirit in the heart of man. By this we do not understand that extraordinary impression which some of old have been favoured with, who are said to have been ‘moved by the Holy Ghost,’ or to have had an extraordinary ‘unction from the Holy One,’ whereby they were led into the knowledge of divine truths in a way of supernatural illumination. This we pretend not to; for extraordinary gifts have ceased. It does not follow, however, that the Spirit does not now influence the minds of believers in an ordinary way, whereby they are instructed and confirmed in all necessary truths, and particularly in this, that the scriptures are the word of God. No privilege referring to salvation was ever taken away, without some other, subservient to the same end, having been substituted in its room;—unless indeed a notorious forfeiture has been made of it, and the church, by apostacy, has excluded itself from an interest in the divine regard. And as this cannot be said of the gospel-church, in all the ages since extraordinary gifts have ceased, we must conclude, that, in the absence of former methods for vindicating the divine authority of scripture, believers have, instead of them, an inward conviction wrought by the Spirit of God, agreeable to his present method of acting; otherwise the present dispensation is, in a very material circumstance, much inferior to that in which God discovered his mind and will to man in an extraordinary way.

But that we may explain what we mean by the inward testimony of the Spirit in the hearts of men, whereby they are fully persuaded that the scriptures are the word of God, let it be considered, 1. That it is something more than simply a power or faculty of reasoning, to prove the scriptures to be divine; for that is common to all men, while this is a special privilege given only to believers. Moreover, there may be a power of reasoning, and yet a mistaken exercise of it; so that this is not sufficient fully to persuade us that the scriptures are the word of God, and is something inferior to what is intended in this answer. 2. The inward testimony of the Spirit in the hearts of men is something short of inspiration. Hence, though the scripture was known to be the word of God by the Spirit of inspiration, so long as that continued in the church; yet that privilege having now ceased, the internal testimony of the Spirit contains a lower degree of illumination, which has nothing miraculous attending it. 3. It is not an enthusiastic impulse, or strong impression upon our minds, whereby we conclude a thing to be true, because we think it is so. This we by no means allow of; since our own fancies are not the standard of truth how strong soever our ideas of things may be. Therefore, 4. This inward testimony of the Spirit contains in it a satisfying and establishing persuasion, that the scriptures are the word of God,—a persuasion supported by other evidences and convincing arguments, and particularly by that which is taken from the use which God makes of the scripture, in beginning and carrying on the work of grace in the souls of believers; and this firm persuasion we find sometimes so deeply rooted in their hearts, that they would sooner die ten thousand deaths than part with scripture, or entertain the least slight thought of it, as though it were not divine. And certainly there is a special hand of God in this persuasion, which we can call no other than the inward testimony of the Spirit to the divine authority of scripture. [See Note Y, p. 77.]



[NOTE O. *The Genuineness and Credibility of Scripture*.—Dr. Ridgeley, before discussing the inspiration of scripture, “premises some things respecting the nature, necessity, and possibility of revelation;” and when stating his third remark on them, says, “These points must be made apparent, else it is vain to attempt to give arguments to prove the scriptures to be the word of God.” But it is scarcely less vain to make this attempt without first proving the genuineness and credibility of the books of scripture. Some of the most important arguments for the inspiration of the books, assume that the genuineness and credibility of them are admitted, or suppose previous proof to have been offered quite sufficient to convince the judgment of any man who is not determined to reject all evidence. I shall, therefore, give, in as compressed a form as possible, an outline of proofs for the genuineness and credibility of the books of the New Testament. As to the books of the Old Testament, they will stand accredited by many of the arguments, just as if these were adduced to support them; and, especially, they are so abundantly vouched for both by direct statements and by multitudinous quotations in the books of the New, that separate evidence of their genuineness and credibility, after offering it on behalf of the New Testament, is altogether superfluous.

### *The Genuineness of the Books of the New Testament.*

A book is genuine which was written by the author to whom it is ascribed. Some of the books of the New Testament profess, in general terms, to have been written by immediate disciples of Christ, and are proved to be genuine, simply if proved to be apostolic; others profess to have been written respectively by Paul, John, Peter, James, and Jude, and, in order to be proved genuine, must be severally traced to the individuals whose names they bear. Evidences of genuineness, as they affect the former class, may be not only satisfactory, but redundant; or they may be such as not alone prove the books to be apostolic, but discover and authenticate their respective authors. Such proofs as I shall advance, apply, for the most, to all the books of the New Testament, and contain subsidiary evidence, either expressed or implied, which bears on the books in detail, or on such of them as may be individually mentioned. I shall give them in the fewest words possible, and must rely on the reflection of my readers for eliciting their force, and giving them a practical application.

I. No reason can be urged against the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, which does not operate with vastly greater force against any of the ancient writings which are universally received as genuine. Listen to the reasonings of an infidel against an epistle of Paul or one of the four gospels, and apply them to Homer's Iliad, Virgil's *Æneid*, Herodotus' History, and similar works; and you will find that they throw doubts on all these received books of antiquity, long before they raise a difficulty respecting a book of the New Testament. Tested by infidel argument, Paul may be the undoubted author of the epistles ascribed to him, after Homer, Virgil, and Herodotus are made to be suspected as fabricated or merely supposititious names. Yet the works ascribed to these authors are universally received as genuine. Why, then, should the genuineness of Paul's epistles be called in question?

II. If the books of the New Testament had not been apostolic, they would have been ascribed to the most eminent persons of the age in which they profess to have been written. Other existing documents than they profess to be apostolic, but are easily proved to be spurious; and they are ascribed to Nicodemus, to the whole college of the apostles, and even to our blessed Lord. The object of the fabricators was to stamp them with importance. But what fabricator would have ascribed professing apostolic books to such men as Mark, Luke, or Jude, who, as compared to other immediate disciples of Christ, were always obscure or secondary persons? Or what fabricator would have passed by Andrew, Thomas, Bartholomew, Philip, Simon, James the son of Zebedee, and all the seventy disciples, assigning only meagre writings to even Peter, John, Matthew, James the Less, and Jude, while he ascribed no fewer than thirteen books to ‘the young man Saul,’ who was ‘as one born out of due time?’ What fabricator, in particular, would have forbidden to ascribe some leading writings to the Lord Jesus?

III. The style of the New Testament is peculiarly such as the writers to whom the several books are ascribed might be supposed to employ.

1. It is not classical. That, indeed, of the books ascribed to Paul and Luke approaches to be so; but that of the other books is eminently what a polished or native Greek would have pronounced anomalous and inelegant. Now, Paul and Luke were learned men, the former ‘brought up at the feet of Gamaliel,’ and the latter ‘a physician;’ while the other reputed authors were all professedly illiterate.

2. It abounds in Hebrew and Syriac idioms. A Grecian would have written pure Greek; a Syrian would have written mere translated Syriac; a religious Jew, unacquainted with Christianity, would have written wholly in the idiom of Hebrew;—but only men situated exactly as the apostles, could have woven, upon a general texture of Greek, such a peculiar fringing of Hebrew and Syriac, as is found in the New Testament.

3. It wants the marks of every age but the apostolic. The nearest kindred writings to those of the New Testament, viewed simply as to subject and style, are the books of Maccabees, and the works of the earliest Christian fathers. But though the former immediately preceded the apostolic age, and the latter immediately succeeded it, both are characterized by a style essentially different from that of the New Testament. A cognate style to that of spurious existing books, which profess to be apostolic, may be found in various early writers; but no style can be found cognate to that which is ascribed to Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, and their fellow-writers.

IV. The characteristics or peculiar statements of the books, minutely agree with the position and character of the reputed authors.

1. They contain many intimate allusions to Jewish customs and ceremonies. Now the authors



were Jews, who had witnessed the customs of the Jewish nation from infancy, and had often acted a part in both their civil and their religious ceremonies.

2. They display intimate acquaintance, not alone with the practice of the Roman government in Judæa, but with the local feelings and opinions which it excited. Just such a political condition as they impliedly describe, is proved by Josephus and other neutral authors to have existed at the precise epoch when the books profess to have been written. Now the authors lived in Judæa, under the Roman government, daily witnessing the conduct of governors and the governed.

3. Some of the books minutely allude to the manners, feelings, rural occupations, or industrious habits of the common people. Now the reputed writers of these books were poor men, belonging to the humblest class of society, who had personally mingled in every scene of humble life.

4. Others of the books, e. g. the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles of Paul, contain remarks of striking but remote coincidence with the ascertained condition, in politics, science, history, or topography, of the provinces of the Roman empire. Now the reputed writers of these books personally traversed the districts to which their remarks apply, and held intimate intercourse with the native population.

V. Some early enemies of Christianity, such as Celsus, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian, attacked the books of the New Testament in form, and laboured to destroy their credit, yet they never called in question their genuineness. Julian wrote in the fourth century, Porphyry in the third, and Celsus in the reign of Adrian, or about the middle of the second; and they all, especially Celsus and Porphyry, enjoyed the amplest opportunity of assailing the books by every possible argument of coincidence or testimony; yet they felt constrained to admit their genuineness, and were obliged to rest contented with cavilling at their inspiration.

VI. The names and transactions of the reputed authors are recorded by writers of the first and second centuries. 'Paul' is spoken of by Clement of the first century, and Ignatius of the second; 'Paul and the rest of the apostles,' by Polycarp of the second century; 'Peter and John,' by Ignatius of the second century; 'Peter,' by Clement of the first century, and Papias of the second; and 'John and others who had seen the Lord,' by Irenæus of the second century. Now Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and Irenæus, are all admitted to be genuine writers, and, along with about twenty others, most of whom also make personal references to the apostles, are the only extant Christian authors previous to the third century, by whom the penmen of the New Testament could have been noticed. They all lived so near the period when the books of the New Testament profess to have been written, that had any imposture existed, they could not have failed to detect it, and must have traced it to the very age in which several of the apostles survived. But they mention the penmen of the New Testament with confidence, and speak of them as having occupied exactly the position in which their reputed authorship of the books represents them to have been placed.

VII. Most of the books of the New Testament are mentioned singly or collectively as existing documents by the early Christian writers. 'Matthew' is mentioned by Papias; 'Mark' by Papias; 'The Four Gospels' by Cyprian; 'John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark,' by Tertullian; 'the gospels' by Justin Martyr; 'the Scriptures of the divine Gospels,' by Eusebius; 'the Historical Books,' by Justin Martyr; 'the gospels and apostles,' by Ignatius; 'the Acts,' by Origen and Cyprian; 'First Corinthians,' by Clement; 'Ephesians' by Ignatius; 'St. Paul's epistles,' by Tertullian; and 'the Scriptures of the Lord,' by Theophilus. Now Clement wrote in the first century, Ignatius, Papias, Tertullian, Theophilus, and Justin Martyr in the second, Cyprian and Origen in the third, and Eusebius early in the fourth; and all these writers treat the books which they respectively mention, as of received and of undoubted genuineness.

VIII. The books of the New Testament were read and expounded as apostolic documents, or as the writings of the penmen to whom they are severally ascribed, in the public assemblies of the early Christians. This fact is attested by Eusebius, by Cyprian, and even by Tertullian, and by Justin Martyr. The third and fourth of these authors wrote in the second century; and all the four knew and referred to the public practice of the Christian churches, from the time of the apostles. The whole body of Christians from before the days of Justin Martyr are, in consequence, proved to have received the books of the New Testament as genuine. Or, more strictly, these books, as reputed apostolic writings, are traced up the broad stream of the whole Christian community, till the very days in which their professed authors lived. Could they have been fabricated and falsely imputed, under the very eyes of the men to whom they are ascribed?

IX. Several of the books are quoted, as existing documents and as apostolic writings, by some of the earliest Christian writers. The Gospel according to Matthew is quoted by Barnabas, Clement, and Hermas, the only extant Christian authors of the first century, and by Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Theophilus, four of the very few extant authors of the second. The Gospel according to Mark is quoted by Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, both of the second century. The Gospel according to Luke is quoted by Clement, Hermas, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Athenagoras. The Gospel according to John is quoted by Hermas, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Theophilus. The book of Acts is quoted by Hermas and Polycarp. The Epistle to the Romans is quoted by Clement. But all these are instances of quotation in only the few and scanty extant genuine writings of one hundred years succeeding the completion of the books of the New Testament. Let instances be taken from the copious and more numerous writings of the period which followed, and the list of quotations will be unmanageably long.

X. Some of the books are minutely described, as to their received authorship and contents, by early writers. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are described by Clement and Eusebius; and Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts, by Irenæus of Lyons.

XI. Formal catalogues of the books, ascribing them to their respective authors, are given by early writers. Catalogues of precise and conclusive character are given in particular by Origen,

Athanasius, Cyril, and Jerome. This fact is decisive, not alone as to the genuineness of the books, but as to the canonicity of the New Testament. The catalogues are not lists of what the individual writers esteemed apostolic documents, but lists of what had been received as such by the Christian churches, from the earliest period to the time at which they severally wrote; and they constitute an evidence of genuineness which applies to all the books, and is stamped with the concurrent assent or accumulated testimony of the whole primitive Christian community.

XII. The books of the New Testament were collated, commented on, and translated in the early centuries of the Christian era.

1. Harmonies of the books were written by Ammonius, and by Julius Africanus, both of the third century.

2. Commentaries on the books were written in 170 by Tatian, in 190 by Pantænus, and in the fourth century by no fewer than fourteen authors.

3. Versions of the books were made, in the first century, into the Syriac language; in the second, into the Latin and the Sahidic; in the fourth, into the Ethiopic; and in the fifth, into the Coptic.

Now, the Harmonies, the Commentaries, and the Versions, had each the force both of a catalogue, and of a minute description of contents; and they all prove the genuineness of the books as resting on concurrent primitive testimony, and on the universal consent of the ages immediately succeeding the apostolic.

XIII. Many very ancient manuscripts of the books have been found in countries mutually distant and unconnected. The existence of ancient manuscripts is, in most cases, the sole, or almost the sole evidence for the genuineness of any received writings of antiquity. But the ancient manuscripts, in the case of all other works, are few, collusive, and of recent date, compared to those in the case of the books of the New Testament. The ancient manuscripts, in the latter case, are so independent of one another as to the circumstances in which they were written, that they belong to at least three great classes, all as separate from one another as distance of country, improbability of intercourse, and difference of vernacular tongue, among the respective classes of transcribers, could possibly have rendered them. The manuscripts are also very old: of those still in preservation, one bears marks of the third century, two of the fourth, several of the fifth or sixth, and many of the centuries before the twelfth. These are all in the Greek language, and are independent of manuscripts, some of them equally ancient, of the earliest versions. Now, each manuscript—treating it as any man, even an infidel, treats an ancient manuscript of a Greek or Latin classical author—is in itself a complete proof of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament. How strong, then, is the evidence from a number of manuscripts, great, far beyond any parallel, uncollusive, unconnected, extremely ancient, and all concurring to ascribe the books to their several reputed authors!

Objections to the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, either such as may be conceived, or such as infidels have actually advanced, are, for the most part, such as some of the preceding arguments directly and thoroughly answer. All which these arguments do not completely dispose of, may be comprehended in two.

First: The concurrent testimonies of Christian writers, as to the genuineness of the books, might have been designed.

But where is there reasonable ground of suspicion that they were so? The objection is founded on a gratuitous conjecture, and cannot be supported by even the shadow of evidence. No instance of apparent collusion has been adduced as to even any two testimonies. How then can we imagine collusion as to the whole?

Again: many of the testimonies are indirect, parenthetical, or incidental. None of them wear the appearance of having been written as testimonies, or with the view either of being quoted as authority, or of authenticating the apostolic writings. They consist simply of passing allusions, and never constitute the main aim of their authors. But had they been designed, they would have been direct, pointed, and formal, and would, at the same time, have been much more minute and numerous than we find them.

Further: the testimonies, as to the language, periods, and countries, in which they were written, were separate from one another, remote, unconnected, and independent. Some were written in Latin, and others in Greek, the former at the extreme west, and the latter at the extreme east of the civilized world, at a time when few persons who knew either language were acquainted with the other. Some were written in Syria, some in Cappadocia, some in Asia Minor, some in Greece, some in Egypt, some in Carthage, some in Italy, and some in Gaul, some in the first century, some in the second, in the third, in the fourth, when the means of intercourse between even neighbouring provinces were more seldom and imperfect, than those which exist now between the most distant regions of the globe. Collusion, in such circumstances, was morally and even physically impossible.

II. Why are not other extant documents than those of the New Testament, which profess to be apostolic, admitted to be genuine?

First: they contain only matter which is directly borrowed from the received books, with a few trifling and uncorroborated additions. In other words, their claim to apostolicity rests wholly on their having clumsily pirated such portions of the received books, as could most easily be subjected to change of phraseology.

Again: no documents professing to be apostolic, except those in the received canon, are quoted or mentioned by any writers of the first, second, or third century, or possess any of those evidences of genuineness which have been detailed in support of the received books.

### *The Credibility of the Books of the New Testament.*

A book is credible, the statements of which are worthy to be believed. Credibility is opposed to spuriousness of matter, as genuineness is opposed to spuriousness of authorship. The



books of the New Testament having been authentically traced to their reputed authors, are next proved to contain only such statements as are true. Their credibility refers, in the first instance, to facts, and then, by implication, to doctrines. What they state as sentiments or moral principles are all based on what they state as having been events. On the truth of their narratives turns the credibility of their entire contents. My proofs, therefore, shall refer to the books of the New Testament, chiefly, as historical documents.

I. The books do no more than assign adequate causes for effects which are known, on numerous testimonies, to have been produced, and describe effects naturally arising from causes which all parties admit to have existed.

1. They only assign adequate causes for known effects. No person doubts that, from the middle of the reign of Tiberius, Christianity, which had just sprung into being, spread in the face of unexampled persecutions, and amidst the most adverse circumstances, simply by the power of persuasion, and with irrepressible and amazing rapidity, throughout the civilized world. What causes but those assigned in the narratives of the New Testament, can account for an occurrence so utterly out of the ordinary course of human experience? Many other admitted events might be named, adequate causes for which are assigned only in the books of the New Testament.

2. The books only describe the natural effects of known causes. Let any man examine the admitted history of the Jews, let him study in particular the causes which had remotely and recently operated to form their character, and mould their condition; and he will find in the New Testament copious accounts of their opinions, prejudices, usages, and temporal state,—exactly such effects as the combination of remote and recent influences to which they had been subjected, must naturally have produced. The death of Christ, the conversion of many Jews to Christianity, the steadfast endurance by Christians of severe persecution, as well as many other great causes of moulding opinion, revolutionizing society, or otherwise strongly influencing events, are admitted, on heathen or neutral testimony, to have existed; and they necessarily led exactly to such results as are regularly detailed in the statements of the New Testament.

II. The books were written in circumstances which rendered imposture or fabrication impracticable.

1. The occurrences which they record were public, well-known, and capable of being tested by the evidence of adverse witnesses. The leading events had been the most public and remarkable of the age in which they occurred, and had drawn the general attention of the population among whom the books were published. Even the lesser events were all matter of notoriety before the books were written. Almost every occurrence stated in the New Testament had been a subject of investigation and curiosity among the people to whose perusal it was submitted. A fabricator would have laid the scene of his events either in a secluded district, or in regions and times far remote.

2. The people among whom the books were published had the strongest jealousy of their object, and the most violent hostility to their doctrines. The Jews would sift every recorded fact to the bottom. No effort would they leave untried to detect falsification, exaggeration, or even circumstantial discrepancy. A fabricator either would not have dared to publish under their surveillance, or, had he dared, would instantly have been detected and disgraced.

3. The writers of the books, though united in one bond of faith, were scattered and mutually remote. Matthew wrote in Judea, Mark at Rome, Luke in Greece, and John at Ephesus; and the first, second, and third of these, whose writings embrace the same topics, and are those of the books which most nearly resemble one another, wrote about the same period, Matthew and Mark having written in the year 64, and Luke in the year 64 or 63. Collusion among writers so remote from one another, and having no possibility of mutual communication before they severally published, was physically impossible. Paul, again, between whose epistles and the book of Acts there are many coincidences, wrote at Corinth, at Ephesus, in Macedonia, and chiefly at Rome, from the year 52 till the year 63; while Luke, the author of the book of Acts, wrote in Greece about the year 63.

III. The writers of the books were competent narrators of the facts which they recorded.

1. They were either, as in the majority of instances, personal witnesses of the facts, or, as in the case of Mark, who acted in a measure as the amanuensis of Peter, they received their information immediately from witnesses. Who were so competent to narrate the life and sayings of Christ as Matthew, Peter, John, and the other apostles who lived with him throughout the period of his ministry, and who, either personally or through Mark and Luke—themselves no mean witnesses—compiled the four gospels? Who so competent to narrate the voyages and numerous journeys of Paul, as Luke, who, for the most part, was his fellow-traveller? Or who so competent to describe the condition of the Ephesian, Galatian, Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Roman churches as Paul, who either planted them, or witnessed their infant condition, and in every case superintended their progress? Or who so competent to describe the seven churches of Asia, and the sect of Nicolaitanes or Gnostics, as John, who long lived amongst them, and watched their departure from apostolic Christianity?

2. The writers furnish no appearance of credulity. On the contrary, they stand unequalled, unapproached, and perhaps unimitated, in the remarkable property of narrating stupendous or uncommon events in a style so dispassionate as to prove the utter absence of any play of imagination.

3. They were not more subject than other men to mistakes, nor were exposed to imposition. Nothing can be objected against their capacity, which may not forcibly be objected against the capacity of almost all original historians; nor can any charge be laid against them of mistake or misconception, which will not impugn the credibility of the most accredited documents in existence.

4. Their integrity, though rigidly tried, was found to be unimpeachable. No proof is on record of their having wanted veracity, or fair moral character. The chief or only crimes ever alleged



against them were their opinions,—those opinions which they openly and boldly promulgated as doctrines of salvation, in their published writings.

IV. The writers of the books display extraordinary candour.

Matthew narrates his original inglorious condition of a publican; Peter, through Mark, describes in the darkest colouring the events of his temporary apostacy; Paul speaks of his having been 'a blasphemer and a persecutor,' and of strivings of unholy desire in his recent character; and all the writers expatiate on circumstances of their religion which exposed their persons to the certain derision and contempt of the world. A fabricator would have concealed what was ignominious, and invented whatever fiction might have dazzled or aggrandized.

V. The historical statements of the books possess, in keeping with their avowed objects, all the characteristics of true narrative.

1. They are complete. If they profess to narrate an event, they exhibit it in its cause, in its effects, in its design, and in all its details; or if they profess to discover the historical basis of a doctrine, they exhibit the whole fact on which the doctrine is founded, and fully explain in what respects the two are connected. No statement is cut short, so as to leave the reader in suspense, or to make an appeal to his imagination. Every narrative is so complete that the events described must have been before the writer's mind far more fully and distinctly, than if they had been either fiction, or mixtures of fact and fabrication.

2. The statements are minute. Spurious or exaggerated narratives are always general and indefinite; but the narratives of the New Testament are in the highest degree circumstantial, noticing the most minute particulars, and detailing the smallest matters with the same air of precision as the greatest.

3. The statements are consistent. Though they include the most various elements, grouping together all sorts of characters, and amassing the most heterogeneous materials, the picture which they exhibit is in beautiful, accurate, perfect keeping. Other writings which are received as credible, often contain most glaring discrepancies, and even palpable contradictions; but the writings of the New Testament are consistent to a degree which frees them, not alone from the charge of fabrication, but from the suspicion of mistake.

4. They are simple and unimpassioned. Either invention or exaggeration is the work of the fancy, and cannot go on without emotion; and it also invariably leads to rhetorical flourish, or at least to a violation of simplicity. But the books of the New Testament, though detailing the most wonderful occurrences, are as unadorned and dispassionate as the humblest and most unpretending narrative.

VI. Though the writers, especially the four evangelists, wrote independently of one another, in countries mutually remote, and nearly at the same period, they minutely agree as to all the essential circumstances of what they record, while they fall into such apparent discrepancies as arise from computing time in different methods, from using words in different acceptations, or from narrating the same events in subordination to different designs.

Matthew and Mark say, 'that after six days' Jesus went to the mount of transfiguration; but Luke says, 'that after eight days,' he went. Now, the former evangelists excluded, while the latter included, the day from which they dated, and the day on which the transfiguration occurred. Luke says, that the men who journeyed with Saul to Damascus 'heard the voice' of him who spake from heaven; but Paul himself says, that they 'heard not the voice.' Now Luke by 'the voice' means the sound or prefatory thunder which stupified the men, while Paul means by it the articulate utterance which was addressed solely to himself. Matthew and Mark speak of 'an angel' as having attended the resurrection of Christ; but John speaks of 'two.' Now John simply narrated the event of the resurrection as it occurred, while Mark and Matthew diverge into a description of angelic manifestation, telling how 'an angel shone,' yet omitting to state that 'two angels' were present. Only such apparent discrepancies as these occur in the books of the New Testament,—discrepancies which disappear before an examination of the respective designs of the writers, and which strongly prove the absence of all collusion, and at the same time serve as a powerful reflector to the minute agreement which pervades the narratives.

VII. Among the books in general, and especially between the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul, there exist numerous yet remote coincidences.

These coincidences are extremely striking. They are perfectly exact; yet often are so remote as to be discoverable only by a process of two or three consecutive inductions. They could not have been designed, for they lie too deep beneath the surface, to be available to any except men of painful research; yet they are greatly more numerous and perfect, than if they had been the result of patient and dexterous study. Those between the book of Acts, and the epistles of Paul, form the subject of Paley's '*Horræ Paulinæ*.'

VIII. The statements of the books coincide with known or independently authenticated circumstances to which they refer.

1. They coincide with admitted facts, authenticated by profane historians. Instances of this occur in Matt. ii. 22; Luke ii. 1; and iii. 1; Acts xii. 1; xi. 23; xii. 19—23; xiii. 6; and xxiv. 24.

2. They coincide with political, secular, or heathen practices, which are known to have been contemporaneous. Instances of this occur in John xix. 19, 20; Acts iv. 1; and xvii. 22.

3. They coincide with existing customs, attested by Jewish writers who were hostile to Christianity. Instances of this occur in Mark viii. 3, 4; Acts xvi. 13; and xxi. 23, 24.

IX. Some leading statements of the books, including those which form the basis of the most important doctrines, are repeated by cotemporary Jewish and heathen writers.

The events respecting John the Baptist, and the circumstances of the death and resurrection of Christ, are mentioned by Josephus. The persecution of the first Christians, and especially the

apostles' being 'made a spectacle to the world,' and treated as 'fools,' are mentioned by Tacitus. The opinions of the Jewish sects, and the customs and morals of the Jewish nation, are detailed by Josephus, and several Roman writers. The manners, moral practices, and superstitious observances of the heathens, are described by many authors. The notices of Jewish and Roman princes and governors, concur with the general testimony of contemporaneous history. Some of these instances, such as those respecting the moral condition of the Jews and the heathens, include a great diversity of particulars, almost all of which, as well as the general facts, are confirmed by independent testimony.

X. The books narrate events and promulgate opinions which formed the natural origin of numerous remarkable usages of the primitive Christians, which are mentioned as novelties by profane authors of the first century.

The authors who describe the usages, uniformly date them at a period subsequent to that at which the books were written. They also ascribe the usages to the new religion of Christianity. Now, whatever was remarkable, peculiar, or novel in what the authors describe, is exactly accounted for by the statements of the New Testament. Either these statements propagated the usages throughout the empire, or they were a transcript of actual circumstances in which the usages originated.

XI. Many persons who witnessed the facts recorded in the books, or who received information respecting them from personal witnesses, and enjoyed the most abundant opportunities of testing their credibility, voluntarily underwent sufferings and death, to attest that the facts were true.

These persons were what are called confessors and martyrs. But they did not suffer for their opinions: they suffered for their belief of facts. They were all either personal or secondary, and most competent witnesses to the facts on which Christianity was based; and they were tortured and destroyed, that either they might be compelled to deny what they had attested, or might no longer work havoc upon the reigning superstition by the effects of their testimony. Both the fact and the nature of their sufferings are mentioned in the first century by Clement and Hermas, and by the heathen writers Tacitus and Martial, and early in the second century by Polycarp and the heathen writer Suetonius.

XII. The books of the New Testament are sometimes associated by early writers with those of the Old, as though the two sets of documents were equally received, or stood upon an equal footing of authority.

Clement of the first century speaks of 'the Law, the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Gospel.' Hegeippus, Ignatius, and Irenæus of the second century, speak respectively of 'the Law, the Prophets, and the Lord,' 'the Prophets, but especially the Gospels,' and 'the apostolic writings, the Law and the Prophets.' Origen of the third century is more formal, and speaks, as a modern would do, of 'the Old and New Testament,' and 'the Ancient and New Scriptures.' Now the books of the Old Testament were universally received by the Jews as not only credible but inspired; and those of the books which are historical, were received even by the heathens as narratives at least equally credible with those of any ancient historians. The associating of these books and those of the New Testament by early Christian writers, would therefore seem to prove that the latter were generally esteemed credible,—that they were esteemed so by a people who denied their inspiration, and rejected their doctrines, and at the same time possessed ample opportunity to investigate, and, had it been practicable, to impugn their facts. Or if the associating of the books of the Old and those of the New Testament, does not prove that the latter were actually esteemed credible by the whole hostile or neutral community, it at least proves that they were so esteemed by all classes of persons to whom the early Christian authors addressed their writings.

XIII. The books were appealed to in all the controversies respecting Christianity, which occurred during the first and second centuries, and were treated on all sides as conclusive authority respecting facts.

Though some persons professing to be Christian denied that particular books were inspired, they nevertheless admitted that they were credible; and though heathen and Jewish opponents rejected them on account of their doctrines, they paid them remarkable deference as historical documents. All modern infidels freely admit, and even quote for their own purposes, whatever historical statements of the Bible can be detached from the peculiar doctrines of revelation; and they in consequence constructively assent to the credibility of at least those books from which they quote. But this conduct is a mere inconsistency. That of the early controversialists, on the other hand, was a regular, formal, professed appeal to the books of the New Testament, as documents of historical authority.

XIV. Those statements of the books which form the basis both of their doctrines and of all their minor or subordinate facts, were admitted to be true, and even adopted and repeated, by the public opponents of Christianity.

The death and exalted character of Christ were so generally admitted at Rome, that the emperor Tiberius, in whose reign he was crucified, proposed his being enrolled among the Roman gods. The spread of the gospel over Judea and throughout the regions mentioned in Paul's epistles and the book of Acts, was recognised in the public edicts of the empire, and made the avowed basis of the imperial persecutions to which the Christians were subjected. Even the change in condition, in moral habits, in social sentiments and in religious usages, which the books describe as having been produced respectively in Jews and Heathens who believed the gospel, is admitted as to almost all its details, and is in some instances even minutely described, by such persons as Tacitus, Celsus, and Porphyry.

XV. The doctrines of the books and the credit of their narratives, were rapidly diffused and publicly professed, amongst the population who had the highest facilities for ascertaining the truth or falsehood of the facts on which they were based.



Christianity rose to gigantic strength almost the instant after it began to exist. As is ~~described~~ by Jewish and heathen historians, it spread throughout most parts of the Roman empire, during the generation which lived at the commencement of the apostolic ministry. What is chiefly remarkable is, that it spread first and most rapidly in Judea. Yet the books of the New Testament state the miracles and discourses of Christ to have been so numerous, and to have been performed and spoken before such multitudes and in so many parts of the country, that there could have lived no persons in Judea, at the period when it extensively received Christianity, who either had not seen the miracles and heard the discourses, or at least did not enjoy opportunity to make inquiries respecting them of personal witnesses, both friendly and hostile. The people of the first century, especially they of the generation cotemporary with the death of Christ, and more particularly such as resided in Judea, or resorted from other countries to the great festivals at Jerusalem, possessed a thousand facilities for investigating the facts of the New Testament; yet they were the very people among whom the credit of the facts, and a belief in all the doctrines consequent upon them, were most rapidly and signally disseminated.

XVI. The writers of the books frequently appeal, for confirmation of their statements, to those who were in circumstances to know or to ascertain their truth; and they often found their admonitions and reasonings upon what were admitted as incontrovertible facts.

The historical statements throughout the epistles are almost all the mere echo of general previous belief. They are assumed as undisputed by the parties to whom the epistles are addressed, and, in the character of undoubted transcripts of acknowledged facts, are directly employed as grounds for admonition, or as the premises of an argument for supporting a conclusion. They are, at the same time, proved on abundant testimony to have been first published among the parties to whom they severally appeal. It hence follows that their credibility was established the instant they were written. Even the historical books, though themselves making no other appeal than the silent but powerful one of their having been first published among the people whom they describe as having been witnesses of most of the facts which they record, contain many discourses, such as that of Peter on the day of Pentecost, that of Paul at Athens, and those of our Lord against the Scribes and Pharisees, which base all their doctrines and admonitions on series of important facts, and appeal for the truth of their premises to the public undisguised acknowledgment of the parties addressed.

XVII. All the Christian writers of the first and second centuries assume, throughout their reasonings, the credibility of the books of the New Testament; or, in other words, they uniformly treat the historical statements of these books as uncontroverted, or as universally admitted to be true.

This is a fact of singular strength; and unless we shall esteem all the early Christian writers to have been egregious fools, and believe that they maintained their influence and propagated their opinions by means of the most contemptible foolery of argument, it proves to demonstration that the credibility of the books of the New Testament was questioned, in the early ages, by neither heretics, Jews, heathens, nor philosophers. The early Christian authors wrote with the express design of propagating Christianity. Many addressed their writings in the first instance and even exclusively to the enemies of the gospel. Some grappled in the tug and wrestle of controversy with those who would now be called the infidel opponents of their faith. Most reviewed the current arguments, objections, or erroneous principles of heretics, Jews, heathens, and philosophers, labouring to convince these classes of persons of their errors, and to convert them to the truth. All the early Christian writers, in fact, exerted their efforts more or less directly with the avowed design, and almost for the sole purpose, of defending Christianity against the objections of its enemies. Wherefore, then, did they never defend the credibility of the books of the New Testament? Why, in particular, did they dare or venture, in all circumstances, to assume that credibility as uncontroverted? The only possible reason must be that there was not in existence, or at least never was publicly avowed, one noticeable objection on the subject.

Modern *objections* to the credibility of the books of the New Testament, additional to such as some of the preceding proofs directly answer, may be comprehended in two.

1. The books of the New Testament were never received by unconverted Jews as they are by Christians, and in particular, they were rejected by such Jews as did not embrace Christianity, and yet had opportunities of testing the historical statements which the books contain.

This objection confounds credibility with inspiration. The Jews certainly never received the books of the New Testament as a revelation or as divine scriptures; yet they have always admitted them to be authentic and credible historical documents. The early Jews, who are the only parties in the case of any weight, never denied the facts which the books record. They denied, indeed, the doctrines which were built upon them; but they often quoted the facts for the purpose of pervertingly supporting their own opinions. They admitted, for example, that Christ was crucified, but denied, on the perverted authority of his own discourses, that he was the Son of God; or they acknowledged that he had worked the numerous miracles ascribed to him, but contended, from his alleged blasphemy, in having called himself the Son of God, that he had worked them through diabolic agency.

11. If the books were credible, it is unaccountable that cotemporary historians should have so slightly noticed the remarkable events which they narrate.

This objection can be met by many answers, but may be overthrown by one or two of the more obvious.

1. That cotemporary historians noticed *at all* the events narrated, is sufficient evidence of credibility. How could they have noticed them if they had not occurred? Or is a notice of no value unless when it is of a length and copiousness to suit the demands of our fancy or our caprice?

2. Most of the writings of the first century are lost; and those which remain are, for the most



part, mutilated. Had all the writings been preserved, they might have been found to contain many corroborations of the New Testament narratives. Such as might have contained corroborations, are exactly the writings which were most likely to have been lost. For,

3. The writings which survive owe their preservation to the circumstance, that the topics of which they treat were those most interesting to the imperial Romans, or to heathen philosophers. Now, the discussion of these topics admitted no direct reference to Christianity, and much less a detailed account of the facts of its origin. Whoever adverts to the character of the writings, to the design of their authors, and to the circumstances of their publication, will only wonder that they adverted even slightly to the subjects of the New Testament history.—ED.]

[NOTE P. *The Harmony of the Scriptures, a Proof of their Inspiration.*—Dr. Ridgeley's argument from the Harmony of Scripture, so far as it is valid, is simply the argument from prophecy,—that scripture contains predictions of events, which are related in credible history, and are universally admitted to have happened as they were foretold. Most of his argument, as illustrated by him, simply exhibits agreements between the prophecies of the Old Testament and the narratives of the New. It ought, however, to have included a view of some of that class of minute, latent, and striking coincidences in description and historical allusion, which Dr. Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, discovers between the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul: it ought, in particular, to have exhibited the remarkable agreement which exists among respectively all the doctrines and all the ethical principles of scripture. A general statement of the argument, as applying to the several books of the New Testament, may be made thus:—The writers wrote in different countries, in different circumstances, with different specific designs, without means of collusion, without opportunity for mutual revision; they addressed themselves to readers of the most various characters; they framed their statements to suit the most discrepant exigencies, and confront the most conflicting prejudices or errors; they touched fact and doctrine incidentally, directly, argumentatively, or in whatever manner was adapted to their respective designs; they dealt with facts which astuteness and cunning had done their utmost to mystify, and with doctrines which were new, profound, numerous, and associated together by many abstract relations; and yet they are all consistent with one another, minutely harmonious, uniformly and perfectly agreed.—ED.]

[NOTE Q. *Paul's Justification by Faith only, and James' Justification by Works.*—The justification of which James speaks, is a justification very often mentioned in scripture, and perfectly familiar to all persons who speak the English language: it is the evincing of a person to be what he professes to be, or the vindicating of him from a charge of deception or of sin. Wisdom, and Christ, and God, as well as Christians, are represented as subjects of this justification. 'Wisdom is justified of her children,'—Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 35. 'God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,'—1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Let God be true, but every man a liar: as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings,'—Rom. iii. 4. James, to illustrate his doctrine, adduces two examples,—that of a professedly benevolent man, who is vindicated by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked; and that of Abraham, who professed to be an obedient observer of the divine will, and was vindicated by offering his son Isaac on the altar. What he understands by the justification of a Christian, therefore, is simply the vindication of his Christian profession or character. Now, Paul everywhere teaches as distinctly as he, that this is effected, not by faith only, but chiefly by works. James, in the same way, teaches as truly as Paul that justification from guilt, or acceptance with God, has connexion, not with works but only with faith. The leading text which Paul quotes in support of it, is quoted for the same purpose by James: 'And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness,'—James ii. 23, comp. with Rom. iv. 2, 3. How does James say this scripture was fulfilled? and what does he imply to be its meaning? It was fulfilled 'when Abraham had offered Isaac his son upon the altar,'—ver. 23. It was fulfilled by an event which did not happen till eighteen years after it was spoken, or after Abraham's faith had been imputed to him for righteousness; and it necessarily had reference to justification with God—justification by faith,—a justification altogether different in character from vindication by works. If James can be supposed to treat of justification from guilt when he speaks of Abraham offering up Isaac, then, by adducing the saying that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, he represents the patriarch as having been justified eighteen years before he was justified. He treats, however, of a totally different matter, and, as we have seen, writes in perfect harmony with Paul.

Dr. Ridgeley's explanation as to James speaking of a justification of *faith*, is hence not quite correct. Faith, in strict propriety of words, cannot even be vindicated from a charge, and still less justified from guilt. A person, an active and intelligent being, is the subject either of justification or of vindication. Dr. R.'s incidental sentiment about 'an historical faith, such as the devils themselves have,' is still more objectionable; and may furnish occasion for a stricture or two, when he comes to discuss the nature and properties of believing.—ED.]

[NOTE R. *Vindictive Justice.*—Dr. Ridgeley's sentiments on this paragraph, clearly imply that there is one rule of rectitude for 'persons in a private capacity,' and another for 'magistrates in the execution of public justice.' No practical principle can be more mischievous or unsound. If any action be sinful to a Christian as a private member of society, will it cease to be so, and become just and obligatory, when he is elected to fill a civil office? Is there, 'in the execution of public justice,' or in the rights and prerogatives of magistrates, an authority to annul or reverse a law of God,—to dispense with the obligations of private conscience,—to perform as necessary to the public welfare, actions which are inconsistent with private personal religion? If so, either moral rectitude is a nose of wax which may be twisted to the right or left agreeably to a man's position in society, or no Christian, without renouncing allegiance to Christ and violating his laws, can act in a magisterial capacity! Mere political economists, who make no pretensions to a superior wisdom

than that of reason, teach a better doctrine than this, and have no difficulty in saying to the magistrate, as truly as to the private member of society, 'Be merciful as your Father also is merciful;' 'judge not, that ye be not judged.' They maintain that 'public justice' ought to be conducted, not for retaliating injuries, but for preventing crime and reclaiming offenders; they can see a model for magistrates as truly in the moral government of Deity, as for private Christians in the perfections of the divine character; and, while inculcating magisterial vigilance and fidelity on the one hand, and official mercy and forbearance on the other, they have no difficulty in recognising a perfect oneness in a public and in a private standard of rectitude.

Dr. Ridgeley forgets that the precept respecting 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' was part of the judicial law, or of that peculiar polity which belonged to the theocratic government of the Jews. An advertence to this fact affords a key to the true reconciliation of the two classes of texts to which he refers. The judicial law, as truly as the ceremonial, was peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation, and became defunct at the advent of Christ. Our Lord, at the commencement of his public ministry, quoted the very precept of it in question, for the purpose of teaching that it was abolished: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also,'—Matt. v. 38—40. The judicial law existed in union with the ceremonial; the one exhibited the severity of justice, and the other the method of mercy; the former inculcated the severity and inevitableness of the deserts of transgression, and the latter the necessity and availability of propitiation by sacrifice. Both received their due fulfilment in the obedience and sufferings of our great Surety; and they were a rule respectively of moral conduct and of acceptable approach to God, only as typifying the properties of his atonement. The principle of 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,'—the principle of vindictive justice, or of retaliating and avenging injuries—has, hence, no place in the rule of rectitude between man and man. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay.' Man, be he serf or magistrate, peasant or prince, may not, without sin, avenge himself; he may not 'return evil for evil;' he may not demand 'an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth.' Public justice, as well as private, is restricted to restoring property, and to protecting and respecting it. Punishment must not be vindictive, but corrective—it must not avenge or retaliate a wrong, but merely chastise with a view to personal amendment and the public safety. What, then, is to be said respecting 'life for life,'—the punishment of death for the crime of murder? It is, in my humble judgment, fearfully wrong; and I shall find occasion to state my reasons, when we shall advance to Dr. R.'s exposition of the sixth commandment.—Ed.]

[NOTE S. *Proof of the Inspiration of Scripture from the Zeal which it displays for the Divine glory.*—Dr. Ridgeley does not see the argument from the zeal of scripture for the divine glory in its full light, and fails to advert to its most striking phasis. The argument may be given in few sentences, and, for the sake of greater brevity, shall be stated with reference only to the New Testament.

Man, in the present state of being, is never, in the ordinary course of things, and especially when opportunity is afforded him of recounting actions which excite the wonder or attract the applause of his fellows, so effectually humbled as not to be influenced by feelings of self-gloriation. The inspired writers were, in this respect, men of the same passions as others, and, according to information furnished by themselves, felt strongly the promptings of vanity to boast of even those spiritual honours which belonged to them as ambassadors of Christ. Paul required to have a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, lest he might be exalted overmuch through the abundance of the revelations he received. Peter exposed himself to public severe censure from a fellow-labourer, on account of weakly seeking the favour of a numerous class of men by trimming to their prejudices. The whole body of the apostles, in fact, engaged at one time in unseemly strife for pre-eminence, contending among themselves as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of their Master. Such are the accounts, furnished by their own pen, of their having shared in the vanity and self-gloriation common to mankind.

Now, liable as the penmen of the New Testament were to exalt themselves and desire personal fame—possessed constitutionally of just the same vain ambition as Julius Cæsar, or any other historian of his own exploits—they, nevertheless, display not one tinge of either self-adulation or homage to one another from beginning to end of their writings. In all histories but those of the Bible, praiseworthiness and wonder are wreathed around the brow of man. Xenophon, Livy, Josephus, Clarendon, and all other ordinary historians talk only of the virtues, prowess, or achievements of human heroes. Julius Cæsar, Marco Paolo, or any other ordinary narrator of his own exploits or travels, lets no leading agent, no object of applause, no wonder-worker or discoverer figure in his pages except himself. Had the penmen of the New Testament written under merely human influences, they themselves and their coadjutors would have stood forth in every narrative as the chief or only claimants of admiration and homage. All their writings, however, proclaim abasement to man, and undivided glory to God. Whatever beneficence they record, is traced to Deity as its source; whatever wonders of love or of power they narrate, are ascribed to him as their cause; whatever claims to praiseworthiness or honour or homage they advance, are made in his name and connected solely with his glory. Men, including the sacred writers themselves, are spoken of only that they may stand rebuked and humbled, or that they may appear as mere instruments under the one, supreme, sovereign agency of God. One apostle figures as the subject of guilty cowardice, base apostacy, and deeply humiliating repentance; another in the mid-career of wonder-working efforts and of splendid successes, describes himself as 'less than the least of all saints'; and all make mention of their excellencies as unmerited gifts of divine bounty, and of their miracles and other achievements as the direct results of divine agency. Their writings, from beginning to end, unfeignedly and fervently echo the sentiment of David: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not



unto us, but unto thy name, give glory.' What a contrast do they, in this respect, exhibit to all other productions of authorship! In scripture, God is all in all: in other writings, man—poor, drivelling, sinful man—is always a prominent, and generally the sole, claimant of praise and admiration. What but inspiration could have so perfectly controlled the ordinary feelings of the sacred penmen, and imbued them with so transcendently a devotional spirit?—Ed.]

[NOTE T. *Consciousness of Inspiration*.—Dr. Ridgeley's speculations as to the manner in which the sacred writers knew themselves to be inspired, are conjectural and unnecessary. No man now knows from experience what the phenomena of inspiration are; nor can any one gather distinct information respecting them from the divine word. The fact, that the sacred writers knew themselves to be inspired, and not the manner in which they knew this, is what we ought to investigate and discern; and it will be clearly understood, and convincingly exhibited, just in the proportion in which it is viewed as a matter simply of testimony or at best of analogy. We can acquire no knowledge or assurance of it by attempting to ascertain *how* it was; we shall form but conjectural ideas of it, by comparing it, as Dr. Ridgeley does, with the fact of a consciousness of spiritual illumination on the part of believers in Christ; we can truly understand it, or perceive the evidence on which it rests, only when we regard it as an essential part of the process of inspiration, and compare it with consciousness of all sorts of knowledge. Every proof that a book is a revelation from God, is necessarily a proof that the writers of it knew themselves to be inspired. Whatever proves that a writing was penned by inspiration, proves at the same time that it was not penned under the influence of fanaticism and delusion. The fact that the sacred penmen had a consciousness of being inspired, stands thus on just the same basis—as broad, as tangible, as convincing—as the general truth that the scriptures are a revelation from God.

• There is, in the consciousness of inspiration, nothing contrary to the ordinary laws of human experience, nothing unanalogous to consciousness of other sorts of knowledge, but everything accordant and harmonious with both. Let it even be supposed that in all instances, instead of merely a few, the sacred writers did not, at the time when they wrote, understand the matters which were suggested to them, they had no more difficulty in perceiving that certain communications had been made to their mind, and no less calm and distinct a conviction that these did not originate in delusion, than the general human mind has in receiving from a parent or tutor the lessons of childhood. Man's mind is so constituted as to receive and retain for years what is utterly devoid of meaning to it, and what by mere reflection it afterwards comes to understand; and it receives and retains such matter, not only without injury to its powers, without contravention of its spontaneous operations, and without detriment to consciousness or hazard of illusion, but in the ordinary course of the training and development of its energies, and in the full exercise of its most wakeful and calm perceptions. Every educated man received lessons in his childhood which long lay like newly masticated food upon his mind, and did not yield intellectual nourishment, or become incorporated with what he knew or understood, till after tedious processes of digestion and secretion; yet he, all the while, possessed distinct consciousness that the lessons had been communicated by a tutor, that they lay lodged in his mind as acquired materials of thought, and that they were neither illusions of his own fancy, nor suggestions from some strange or unremembered source. Now if man, through the defective medium of spoken language, can so communicate ideas to the mind, that, though not understood, they will be retained, and afterwards turned to practical account, God, who is infinitely stronger and more skilful than he, can assuredly do it through the surer medium of moral operation; if man can, in the ordinary course of his educational culture, receive, by the means of sound or of disturbance of the atmosphere, the elements of future thought, he could much more, without suspension or modification of his ordinary reason, receive, by the higher means of a moral impression on his intellect, the elements of full acquaintance with the will of his Creator; and if he, daily, in all circumstances, and in millions of instances, acquires, without confusion or damage to his consciousness, his rote-work lessons from the articulations of a tutor's voice, he could much more, with clear, calm perception of the divine source whence the communications came, receive inspired suggestions from the supreme agency and unerring wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Again, consciousness of inspiration is perfectly accordant with the nature of all knowledge. Every man knows what is presented to his mind, and believes what appears to him to be true; and he knows it just in the light in which it is presented to him, and believes it with more or less firmness according to the strength or nature of the evidence by which it is supported. He knows, for example, that extreme heat gives pain to the body, and believes it on the evidence of sensation; he knows that one reminiscence draws forth another by the attraction of resemblance, and believes it on the evidence of consciousness; he knows that a whole is greater than a part, and believes it on the evidence of intuition; he knows that a ripe orange is yellow, and round, and juicy, and believes it on the evidence of perception; he knows that the inhabitants of New Zealand are cannibals, and believes it on the evidence of written or of oral testimony. But why does he know any of these matters? Just because they are presented to his mind. In what light does he know them? Just in that which belongs respectively to the several media through which they are conveyed. And why does he believe them? Just because all matters presented to the intellect carry with them their appropriate evidence, and necessarily make an impression proportioned to its weight. Now, why should he not know a matter presented to his mind by the divine agency? Why should he not know it in the light of supernatural suggestion? Why should he not believe it on the evidence of divine testimony? Knowledge by divine suggestion is knowledge on exactly the same principle, and according to exactly the same laws, as knowledge by any other medium: it is simply the presenting of objects to the mind,—the presenting of them in a manner and with an evidence suited to their peculiar nature; and it, in no respect, differs more from knowledge of any other genus, than knowledge by intuition differs from that by perception, or knowledge by consciousness differs from that by human testimony. Hence, a man under divine inspiration, and knowing that he is so, is, on philosophical principles, no greater a phenomenon, than a man reading history



or studying mathematics; and he may, on the evidence of divine suggestion, as surely commit the revelation he has received to writing, as, on the evidence of demonstration and of human testimony, the mathematician and the historian may deliver prelections on the properties of angles and the revolutions of empires.—ED.]

[NOTE U. *Modes and Degrees of Inspiration.*—In this paragraph, and in a subsequent one, Dr. Ridgeley hints at the popular doctrine respecting *degrees of inspiration*. In some parts of this section, he makes remote allusion also to the *modes* in which the sacred writers were inspired. On both topics, however, he is confused and obscure. On the former, in particular, he confounds the semi-infidel theory of Socinians with the theory of the opponents of mere plenary verbal inspiration. That some light may be thrown on his allusions, I shall make a remark or two on the subject of modes and degrees.

Many writers distribute inspiration into classes corresponding to the external phenomena with which it came given. When it came through the medium of sounds, they call it audible revelation; when it came through the medium of visions, they call it symbolic revelation; and when it came as a direct influence upon the mind, they call it silent suggestion. They, in consequence, discover as many kinds of revelation as there were varieties of phenomena,—revelation by audible communication, revelation by symbolic representations, revelation by dreams, revelation by Urim and Thummim, and revelation by immediate affluents on the understanding. These varieties they are pleased to designate varieties in the *modes* of inspiration. Every person, however, may, on a moment's reflection, perceive that they are varieties merely in the external or physical phenomena. The mode of inspiration, or the manner in which the Divine Spirit operated supernaturally on the minds of the sacred writers, seems to have been, in all cases, the same. Neither sound, nor symbolic representation, nor anything else, addressed to the senses, constituted inspiration. The supernatural influence of the Divine Spirit on the mind, whether direct or mediate, whether with or without external phenomena, was that alone which either made revelations, or produced a consciousness that they were from God. How this influence operated, we neither know, nor ought to inquire. It is true respecting the regenerating, how emphatically true is it respecting the inspiring influences of the Holy Ghost: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born,' every one that is inspired, 'of the Spirit,'—John iii. 8. But though we know not what the *modus* is, we may easily see that it is unique and uniform. Difference of medium, or difference of external phenomena, cannot affect a manner of operation which is divine, and which, as such, is always, when directed to any given end, one and immutable. To talk of modes of creation, modes of divine volition, modes of God's faithfulness, would seem to me nearly, if not quite as correct, as to talk of modes of inspiration. Phenomena, and circumstances, and objects, differ from one another as widely in various cases of God's creating, and of his willing, and of his fulfilling promises, as in the instances of his inspiring the sacred writers. But are we entitled, in consequence, to speak of modes and kinds of his power, his will, and his faithfulness? The miraculous power of Christ, in particular, was marked by varieties in its display which peculiarly resemble the supposed varieties of inspiration. He exerted it, at one time, while 'he spake with a loud voice'; at another, while he made use of clay and spittle; at another, while a woman touched the hem of his garment; at another, while he travelled at a distance of several miles from the object on which it was displayed. But who will say that it was of different modes of operation,—that, as displayed silently, as displayed by the accompaniment of touch, and as displayed by the accompaniment of sound, it was of different kinds? No one will say so; nor, therefore, will any one who admits the cases to be parallel, talk of modes and kinds of inspiration.

The doctrine of *degrees* is nearly allied to that of modes, and seems always to accompany it. The writers who maintain it, however, appear to be as enveloped in mist, and as shrouded from one another's view, as the ancient theorists in metaphysics: they agree only that there are degrees, but promulge all sorts of contradictions as to the points in which these consist, or the limits by which they are defined. To a superficial student, indeed, they may seem to be so far agreed as all to distribute the degrees into what they term "suggestion," "elevation," and "superintendence;" but they greatly conflict with one another even in this; for they use the same word in totally different senses, and, under cover of the same phraseology, promulge the most discrepant sentiments as to the amount or energy of inspiring influence. Their variations from one another appear to me to arise from the erroneous and illusive character of their fundamental principle. Degrees of inspiration, or differences of quantity in the inspiring agency of the Divine Spirit, seems to my very humble judgment, a notion utterly discountenanced by scripture, and quite repugnant to enlightened and sanctified reason. The scripture's own accounts of its inspiration all contemplate the writings as a whole, and, speaking of them *in cumulo*, exhibit them, in their origin and nature, as in one uniform sense the word of God. 'The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,'—2 Pet. i. 21. 'And he said unto them, All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures,'—Luke xxiv. 44, 45. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,'—2 Tim. iii. 16. These texts appear profoundly uncognizant of the doctrine of degrees: they treat expressly of the subject of inspiration, they exhibit the scriptures as of divine origin, they claim for them just the authority and the influence which arise from their being wholly the word of God; and yet they afford no hint, and no room or scope for insinuation, that they, in any respect, differ from one another, or are of different classes, as to the amount of divine agency which gave them origin. Whoever reads these texts, and others on the same subject, and does not afterwards lose sight of them amid the mazes of "systematic theology," will probably regard it as almost an axiom in Christianity, that the books and parts of scripture are all, in the same sense, and in the same plenitude of supernatural origin, the word of God.

There is, indeed, one distinction, on this subject, which the Bible sanctions,—that, in some parts of scripture, the inspired writers did not, while in other parts they did, understand the meaning of what they wrote, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. But this distinction has reference only to the *topics* of inspiration, and not to its degree or amount. Theological writers usually assume that a loftier or more powerful agency was needed for communicating matters which were not understood, than for suggesting such as were easily comprehended, or for properly arranging and exhibiting those which were previously known. The mere fact that some parts of scripture were not understood by the inspired penmen, is hence the basis on which the whole theory of degrees in inspiration is built. But why should it be thought that matters not understood were the word of God by a higher agency, or in a sublimer sense, than matters which were comprehended, or had been observed? *Information*, it is to be remembered, is not inspiration. Man knew, or might have known, by ordinary observation, many things recorded and taught in the Bible; but, in that case, he knew, or might have known them, only as matters of information; and he can know them as part of God's word, only when they are so arranged by infinite wisdom, and so combined and modified by infinite knowledge, and so imbued with the various sublime properties of divine authorship, as to possess a kind and an amount of moral influence which no skill or perspicacity of man can impart. Now, who will say that there was a smaller amount of divine agency in taking matters of human observation and elevating them to the standard and investing them with the power of divine communications, than in suggesting matters which were utterly unknown? The philosopher who discourses to the mob about insects, and grasses, and pebbles, which are familiar to their observation, and are despised for their insignificance, and who successfully exhibits them as objects of the highest interest and wonder, achieves quite as noble a task, and exerts as strong an influence on their minds, as he who discourses to them about the nebulae and the milky way, and leads them in bewilderment among the mazes of astronomy. Advocates for degrees in inspiration usually represent the writers of the historical parts of scripture, as having simply been preserved from error. But will they make no allowance for the wise selection of materials,—for the skillful collocation of parts,—for the just intermixture of narrative and moral lesson,—for the exact exhibition of the most attractive or influential phases,—for omniscient adaptation to all capacities and varieties of readers, and to all conditions and ages of the world,—for the secret but powerful subordination of the statement of facts to the development of doctrines,—and for harmony, uniqueness, and mutual subserviency, in relationship to each and all of the other parts of scripture? These, and kindred properties,—and not merely correctness of narrative or accuracy of description—are what constitute the historical books the word of God. Now, who will say that the imparting of these properties was less difficult, less superhuman, less eminently divine, than the simple suggesting or communicating of matters not understood? A sacred historian was, in himself, or previous to his inspiration, encumbered with the same weaknesses as other men: he viewed some matters through a false medium; attached to some disproportionate importance; he abstracted some from the principles on which they were really based, and rested them on principles with which they had only remote connexion; he viewed events more in the material than in the moral,—more as detached and final occurrences, than as direct expositors of moral truth; he looked at human actors rather as treading the ordinary arena of life, than as performing their part in the fulfilment of the most stupendous councils of eternity; in a word, he had the thoughts and feelings, the predilections and prejudices, of a mere narrator. How, then, could he, in writing history, become a penman of the word of God? By being merely preserved from error? By enjoying only a low degree of supernatural influence? Surely not. Had he previously known nothing of what he was to write, his mind, as to feeling and prejudice and misconception, would have been free from mischievous and antagonistic influences, and would simply have had to receive communications made to it, as a child receives lessons about unknown things from a tutor. But encumbered, biassed, and wilful as his mind was, he required to be placed under active pressure, and subjected to a controlling energy. While he wrote, the laws of ordinary human experience were suspended and contravened: his feelings were subdued, his prejudices counteracted, his predilections turned aside, and all his motives and machinery of mere historiography broken up or counterworked. His mind, in short, was supremely ruled by supernatural agency. The amount of divine energy requisite to make him an inspired penman, might, on principles of human calculation, be imagined to have been considerably greater than that which was needed or enjoyed by a passive recipient of communications not understood. If, therefore, degrees of inspiration are at all to be conceived of, the inspired historian may, on several grounds, and in important respects, be supposed to have had a higher degree than even the inspired prophet. The two, however, are not to be compared. Both enjoyed the fulness of divine influence,—the plenitude of inspiring energy. Equally in the writer of prophecies, in the writer of didactics, and in the writer of narrative, the Holy Spirit exerted his supernatural power,—his power to exhibit lessons to man which could never have been constructed by the efforts of human reason. All classes of the sacred penmen were inspired to the same degree, and in the same way,—to a degree truly and exclusively divine and in a way consistent with the uniformity of divine operation. What theological writers call degrees of inspiration, are thus merely varieties and differences in the topics discussed. To one inspired penman was given the recording of visions; to another, the reporting of audible communications; to another, the exhibition of argumentative doctrine; to another, the statement of denotation and precept; to another, the divinely instructive collocation of historical occurrences; and in each, as truly as in the others, the Holy Spirit's agency was supreme, the same in energy and in mode of operation. What Paul says respecting the varieties of miraculous gifts, applies in principle to the varieties of inspiration: 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administration, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, (*εργασματα*, miraculous influences,) but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the



same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will,—1 Cor. xii. 7—11. "All these gifts," says Dr. Clarke, paraphrasing the last of these verses, "are miraculously bestowed; they cannot be acquired by human art or industry, the different languages excepted; but they were given in such a way, and in such circumstances, as sufficiently proved that they also were miraculous gifts."—Ed.]

[NOTE V. *Verbal Inspiration*.—Dr. Ridgeley chiefly proves the possibility and desirableness of plenary verbal inspiration, but does not give direct arguments for the fact. I shall briefly state three which he might have adduced.

1. As the mind thinks only in words, inspiration must either have presented ideas clothed in appropriate language, or have merely incited or strengthened the mind to invent or discover them. To have done the latter, would have been only to invigorate, not to reveal: it would have been to enable man to discover or invent religious truths for himself, not to communicate or present them to his understanding. But all believers in inspiration agree that it dealt, not with the mind, but with ideas. Why, then, do any of them deny that it dealt with words? Apart from words, either symbolic or arbitrary, there are no ideas. A man has a confused consciousness that some given idea was at one period present to his mind; he endeavours to recall it, but cannot succeed; he throws away the words employed in his fruitless effort, and adopts others; he now begins to perceive the idea, but perceives it obscurely; he next modifies and alters the words, till at length they bring the idea before him in all its plenitude and clearness. A process like this may be every hour detected by any man who attends to his own consciousness; and it distinctly shows that, constituted as the human mind is, ideas and words, as matters of thought, are inseparable. An infant, or a dumb person, is not an exception; for he thinks in symbols, and, in consequence, possesses ideas of only such objects as are cognizable by sense. Whoever receives a new idea, expresses it to his own mind in terms succinct, diffuse, clear, obscure, or otherwise, corresponding to its own properties; and, if it be faulty, he progressively rectifies it, as he removes the ambiguities, redundancies, or improprieties of its appropriate phraseology. To say, then, that inspiration dealt not at all, or but partially, with words, is tantamount to saying that it dealt not at all, or but partially, with ideas. Even in matters, such as facts and sayings, which were previously known to the writers by personal observation, inspiration must either have dealt chiefly with words, or it must have amounted to no more than a moral influence on the heart. Mere correctness in stating facts, and especially the exhibition of their influential phases, and the perception of their morale, of their connexion with doctrines, and of their harmony with the general scheme of revelation, consisted chiefly, if not solely, in propriety of language, or in strict accuracy of graphic delineation. The communicating of ideas independently of words would, in fact, have been a suspension of the laws of human thought,—a contravening of the methods by which the human understanding works; and it would have served the purpose—of doing what? of imparting the highest certainty to the truth of what the penmen wrote? no, but of impairing that certainty, if not even utterly destroying it. For,

2. Such uneducated men as most of the sacred writers were, and, indeed, any men whatever, could not so overcome the multitudinous errancies of language, as to express any ideas with infallible certainty, unless they had been divinely directed to the adoption of suitable words. Persons who have attended much to literary composition, and have been habituated for years to sift their style and make improvements in their diction, would all laugh at the absurdity of an expectation that, within the period of their life, they should ever become able to write a tractate with such accuracy as would preclude their afterwards detecting in it ambiguities, improprieties, or other blemishes in phraseology affecting the clearness or the truth of their sentiments. The entire force of a paragraph, or of a continuous piece of reasoning, frequently depends upon great niceness in the selection of a single expression. One slightly inaccurate vocable may vitiate a historical statement. Yet, in all countries and in all circumstances, mistakes and improprieties, in the just use of words, occur among the illiterate by the thousand. An uneducated man utters hardly one sentence upon an abstract subject, or upon any topic beyond the range of every-day observation, without employing some word in an improper sense. Even very moderate, or comparative correctness of diction, can be attained only after prolonged and studious practice. Nor, as it exists among the greatest masters of it, does it ever become such as to preclude frequent misapprehension, controversy, and doubt. Thousands of debates continually arise from defects of precision and clearness in the diction of authors. By what hypothesis, then, short of 'a gift of tongues,' a gift of rhetoric, a gift from on high of exactly understanding and accurately selecting the most suitable words,—a gift tantamount, in all respects, to verbal inspiration, can the herdsman of Tekoa, and the fishermen of Galilee, be supposed to have delineated, in perfectly correct phraseology, the sentiments which they wrote?

3. The scriptures declare themselves to contain, not only the truths, but *the words* of God. Such portions of them as were given to the inspired writers by audible communication, must be either garbled reports of what God said, or transcripts of his precise words. All the moral, ceremonial, and judicial law,—all the heavenly communications to Job,—all the messages to kings and nations by the prophets,—these, at least, and some kindred portions of the sacred volume, were originally given in words, and must have been committed to writing exactly as they were received. Now, not only for *the words* of them, but for the words of the histories in which they are interspersed, and of the songs and diallects with which they are accompanied, the inspired writers claim entire reverence and subjection as to 'the words of God.' "Hear, therefore, O Israel, *these words* which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,"—Deut. vi. 4, 6, 7. "Therefore shall ye lay up *these my words* in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes,"—Deut. xi. 18. "And Moses came and spake *all the words* of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea the



son of Nun. And Moses made an end of speaking *all these words* to all Israel: and he said unto them, Set your hearts unto *all the words* which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, *all the words* of this law,'—Deut. xxii. 44—46. 'Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us,'—Psal. lxxviii. 1—3. Who can read such texts as these,—texts which refer to the entire pentateuch, or to others of the sacred books, historical, didactic, and legislative, without identifying inspiration with the words as truly as with the sentiments of scripture? In how solemn an aspect, especially, do the words appear in such a passage as this: 'I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book,'—Rev. xxii. 18, 19. Scripture, when claiming to be an authoritative revelation, thus makes special mention of its words; and, when claiming to be inspired, or describing the influence which rested on its penmen, it, on the same principle, makes mention, not of a process of thinking, but of a process of *speaking*. 'God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,'—Heb. i. 1, 2. 'When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,'—Matt. x. 19, 20. 'No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,'—2 Pet. i. 20, 21. Now, though it were doubted,—while it cannot be denied, much less disproved,—that man always *thinks* in words; it will, on all hands, be readily admitted that, at least, he always *speaks* in words. To speak and not use words, is just as impossible as to see and not possess light. Yet the texts I have just quoted—referring to all the inspired communications made through the prophets under the Jewish dispensation, to the entire 'prophecy which was of old time,' to all the 'more sure word of prophecy,' and to all the suggestions and supernatural communications of the Divine Spirit to the minds of the apostles—distinctly say, 'God spake to the fathers,' 'the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you,' 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Who does not feel as if sedulous care were used in such statements, not only to state, but to inculcate and protect the doctrine of verbal inspiration? Or who, with these statements before him, can coolly conceive of an abstract infusion of unexpressed ideas to the mind, and make no advertence to the simultaneous adjustment of them to an appropriate utterance on the lips? 'The speaking of God by the prophets,' the 'speaking of the Spirit in' the apostles, it is freely admitted, was not vocal, but mental; but still it was 'speaking.' It was not the infusion of the mere materials of thought; it was the suggestion, the communication, or the utterance of expressed ideas; it was a process which, in its very nature, was conducted in the use of words.

The three arguments which I have stated apply equally to all parts of scripture, and confront the theory which denies the plenary verbal inspiration of only some of the sacred books, as well as that which denies the plenary verbal inspiration of the whole. The notion entertained by some eminent theologians that the writers of the historical books were left in a great measure to choose their own phraseology, while the writers of visions and prophecies enjoyed full verbal inspiration, arises altogether from the doctrine which we examined in a former note as to there having been *degrees* of inspiring influence. Let that doctrine of degrees stand exploded, and it follows that if verbal inspiration pervades any one part of scripture, it pervades the whole. Just such reasons as were assigned for the truth or necessity of entirely superhuman influence in writing the historical as in writing the prophetic books, might be adduced also to show the truth or necessity of an uniform verbal inspiration.

Persons who contend that the sacred writers chose their own phraseology, usually appeal to their respective, characteristic varieties of diction. Is it, then, gravely alleged—can it even be seriously insinuated—that the Holy Spirit, when inspiring words, must have framed and uniformly followed a diction peculiar to himself? Or is it assumed that he must have adopted the existing and approved diction of some classic author as his model? All languages, all styles, all systems of phraseology were surely alike known, alike manageable, alike facile to God. To his unerring and omnipotent agency, Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Greek were equally practicable media for an infallible communication of his will. Why, then, should not diversities of Hebrew, or diversities of Greek,—especially such trivial diversities as are usually designated by the word 'style?' His influence on the writers was strictly of a moral nature; it did not alter the physical complexion, or modify the characteristic varieties of their intellectual powers: why, then, should it have taught them a new rhetoric, or made alterations on their idioms and vocabulary? If their characteristic habits of ex-cogitation were a practicable medium of the inspiration of ideas,—their characteristic habits of phraseology must have been as truly a practical medium of the inspiration of words. Let the sacred writers' varieties of style be employed to prove that they chose their own phraseology, and their varieties of mental character—the ratiocinateness of Paul, the fire and energy of Peter, the blandness and gentleness of John—may, from the same principle, be employed to prove that they chose their own ideas. There seems to me, in fact, no consistent medium between the theory which views scripture as a merely authentic record, and the theory which views it as in the fullest sense inspired.

Persons who contend that the sacred writers chose their own phraseology, appeal, further, to the quotations made in the books of the New Testament from those of the Old,—many of which, while they retain the sentiment, considerably alter the expression. But quotation in one book of scripture from what is written in another, is not, in any proper sense of the phrase, quotation by one author from another, but strictly an author's quotation from himself. Now, may not any human author repeat a sentiment in totally different words, or quote from a previous work of his own in

altered phraseology, without either modifying his ideas, or affording any just occasion for suspicion that he does not, both in the passage as quoted from, and in the passage as quoted, use strictly his own words? If he say in all respects the same thing which he said before, he rather commands admiration, than provokes distrust, by the variation of his diction. - And shall the inspiring Spirit, who dictated the sacred scriptures, be restricted to a rule of writing which does not apply to ordinary composition,—which is altogether imaginary or capricious,—and which ascribes to him less power of preserving identity of idea than what is possessed by a human author? The inspired penmen, besides, were controlled in their phraseology, or directed to the adoption of words, only so far as to secure infallibility in the truth of what they wrote; they were not propelled away from phrases or modes of expression which were usual to them, on account of their being idiomatic, or unclassical, or otherwise peculiar; and as the apostles and evangelists were accustomed to think of Old Testament scripture in the words of the Septuagint version, they made their quotations, so far as comported with perfect accuracy of idea, in the language best known to themselves and their immediate readers. They could not quote the *ipsisima verba* of any passage, unless they had quoted in Hebrew. They in reality translated, rather than quoted; and, while employing such Greek phrases and modes of expression as were known to them, they were guided, as the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit, to select and modify with a view simply to the infallibly correct statement of the sentiments translated. If, then, any author may either give a free translation of any passage in his own writings, or quote from himself in altered phraseology, and yet maintain both integrity of idea and originality of expression, the objection against verbal inspiration, based on variations of Old Testament texts as they occur in the New, amounts merely to the capricious prescribing to the Holy Spirit of a rule of composition which is unknown and inapplicable in the literature of any language.

Persons who contend that the sacred writers chose their own phraseology, object, finally, that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is subversive of the authority of translations. Do they mean, then, to say, that translations—that all translations, or any—are of the same authority as the original scriptures? If so, the Jeromes of the early centuries and the Careys and De Lacys, the Protestant missionaries and the Romish universities of modern times, must have enjoyed just as much divine aid in rendering inspired truths into words, as the sacred historians, the apostles of our Lord, or even the writers of prophecies and visions. What a revolting hypothesis! Does it exalt the mistakes of Jerome or the blunders of De Lacy to the standard of the unerring phraseology of Paul and Isaiah? No; but it robs the diction of all the inspired penmen of its intallible accuracy, and sinks it to a level with the crudities of Arius Montanus and the distortions of the Douay translators. Or, when the opponents of verbal inspiration speak of the authority of translations, do they mean merely an authority proportioned to the amount of agreement between the translations and the original? If so, the authority is firm and high, just in the degree in which the diction of the original is certain. Represent a phrase as humanly selected, and you leave a translator in doubt whether he ought rigidly to follow it; but represent it as selected by infinite knowledge and wisdom, and you make him secure that he will bring through the idea which it expresses all the more certainly that he adheres closely to its vocables. Variations of translation, and the subtleties and uncertainties of phraseology which they elicit, are a strong practical argument—not against the verbal inspiration of the original, but for the absolute necessity of it, as a final and infallible appeal from the misconceptions or errors of translators.

I shall conclude by offering a rapid summary of the views of inspiration advocated in these Notes.—Inspiration so fully and divinely controlled the minds of the sacred penmen, as to make them the mere amanuenses of Deity; and yet it exerted no modifying influence on the physical phenomena of their reminiscences, or on their acquired or peculiar habits of phraseology. An inspired writer, in some instances, did not know the moral import of the visions or figures of speech which he committed to writing; and, in other instances, he understood, appreciated, and attested the matters suggested to him as simple reminiscences of what he had personally seen and heard. He also clothed both sentiments and facts in exactly such expressions or words as were supernaturally suggested to his mind; and yet, as appears from the diversity of style among the various writers, as well as from the purely moral nature of inspiration, he was prompted to use only such vocables as were familiar to him, and to arrange them in the order of his accustomed idioms and habitual phrases. Inspiration did not supersede, repress, or modify any of the intellectual peculiarities of a writer; but was concerned solely with the perfect moral and verbal accuracy, the intallible correctness, the divine integrity of what he wrote.—Ed.]

[NOTE W. *The Evidence of Miracles*.—Hume had not flourished when Dr. Ridgeley wrote. Could our author have foreseen what dogmas that infidel promulgated on the subject of miracles, with what metaphysical subtilty he laboured to render them specious, and how extensive a hearing they have obtained in society, he would probably have treated a denial of miracles more gravely than he does. What answer is it to the cavils of a disciple of Hume to say that the reality of miracles "can hardly be reckoned a matter in controversy, for it is a kind of *scepticism* to deny it?" Yet such an answer, if due emphasis be put on the word "*scepticism*," is probably the only one which so wold a theory as that of Hume deserved. Scepticism, especially as exhibited in him, is the most inconsistent and grotesque grouping of vagaries that ever figured before the human fancy. It puts on every-day garments, and follows the current fashions of the world, in every matter of domestic life, of commerce, of arts, of politics, of science; but when matter of *religion* comes to view, it then, and only then, puts on a harlequin dress, and professes to be deaf, dumb, blind, and invisible, knowing nothing, and incapable of being known.

Whoever wishes to see Hume's sophisms anatomized, may consult the works of Dr. Campbell and Dr. Beattie. We can afford only to hint at his attempts to upset the evidence of miracles. His objection, that no human testimony is sufficient to prove a miracle, rests on principles which are contrary to common sense, and which no man, not even Mr. Hume himself, ever ventured to apply to secular subjects. He misstates the nature of human testimony; he misapprehends, or



misrepresents, the laws, or established constitution of nature; he sets principles at war with principles in his argument; and only, after having done all this, does he arrive at the conclusion which gives countenance to his objection. As to his allegation that, though the authenticity of miracles might be quite satisfactory to contemporaries, it is not so to after ages, but progressively diminishes with the lapse of time, till it becomes extinct,—who does not see that, if this were true, all authentic history has long ago become fabulous, and that the credible history of to-day will become fiction to future ages? The allegation supposes the evidence of testimony, like an inscription or a sculptured emblem on a soft stone, to waste away by the attrition of time, and, however legible at first, to become annihilated by age. But who that reflects for a moment on the nature of human testimony, on the considerations which give it force, and on the phenomena of its just and universal influence in producing conviction, does not perceive that, as to the qualities or the validity of its evidence, it has no connexion whatever with time, and that, as attesting any fact, it is invariably of the same force as when first given, so long as it is transmitted amid a fair accompanying view of the circumstances which originally produced it credit? All the abundant and luminous testimony which is on record as to the reality of the miracles of our Lord and his apostles, remains, therefore, of the same force in the nineteenth century, as in the days of Tiberius Cæsar.—ED.]

[NOTE X. *The Spirits of the Prophets subject to the Prophets.*—Dr. Ridgeley seems to me to mistake the sense of this passage. Paul does, indeed, as he remarks, speak, in the context, of prophets uttering revelation and of others judging; but he mentions these topics, especially the latter, only in subordination to the grand object of his argument. What he treats of throughout six preceding, and five following verses is the practicability, desirableness, and necessity of observing decorous order in the exercise of supernatural gifts. He enjoins those who possessed the gift of unknown tongues, to speak by course, and to allow time for others to interpret what they said; he next enjoins those who possessed the gift of prophecy to speak by turns, and each to hold his peace when anything was revealed to another who sat by; and now, in order to show the propriety of what he enjoined, he says, 'Ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.' To prophecy one by one, or in orderly rotation, was essential to the edification and comfort of hearers; it was harmonious with the character of him by whom the prophets were inspired; and it was in keeping with the moral and perfectly controllable nature of the gifts enjoyed. The last of these ideas, as appears to me, is what the words express: 'The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.' The spirits of the prophets, as such—the spirits which constituted them prophets—the spirits, not of the men personally, but of the men as announcers of revelation—in other words, 'the spiritual gifts of the prophets were subject to the prophets; they were not uncontrollable or impetuous; they did not suddenly seize the understanding, and overpoweringly propel it; but they were calm and ratiocinative and orderly, tranquil in their influence, decorous in their display, and, in all respects, stamped with the impress of their author's character, as the God, not of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.'

Dr. Ridgeley's mistaking the meaning of the text, however, does not impair the argument which he adduces his view of it to support. Other texts teach, though this does not, that one of the supernatural gifts of the apostolic age was the gift of 'discerning spirits;' and they contain internal evidence that this gift consisted in a power of discriminating between true and spurious pretensions to the enjoyment of supernatural influence. The 'discerning of spirits,' or of spiritual gifts, it is true, had immediate reference to the gifts of tongues, of interpretation of tongues, of prophesying, or miracles, and to others of a kindred character; but it may, at the same time, be supposed or even proved to have included within its range the gift—if I may call it so—of inspiration,—the amanuensis-ship of the written oracles of God.—ED.]

[NOTE Y. *Inward Testimony of the Spirit to the authority of Scripture.*—Had Dr. Ridgeley treated of an inward testifier, instead of an inward testimony, he would have adhered to his text. The words of the Catechism on which he comments, are: 'But the Spirit of God, bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.' These words, on the whole, contain sound doctrine; but they speak not of a testimony to the truth of scripture, not of an evidence that the Bible is the word of God, but of the agency of the Holy Spirit in enlightening the understanding, and producing conviction in the heart. They speak indeed of the Spirit 'bearing witness;' but they do not mean that he bears some testimony additional to what is contained in the scriptures,—some testimony which exists apart from the other evidences of revelation, and may be viewed as 'inward in the heart.' What they mean by 'bearing witness,' is simply disclosing the evidences to the understanding, so as to produce 'persuasion' or conviction. They are faulty only in using an ambiguous phrase, or one which does not justly express the idea which they intend to convey.

The 'inward testimony' of which Dr. Ridgeley treats, is less sanctioned by scripture than even by the words of the Catechism. He clearly views it and treats it as a distinct and separate evidence that the Bible is the word of God. He is sufficiently inconsistent or confused, indeed, to call it 'a satisfying and establishing persuasion' that the scriptures are the word of God; but he immediately adds, that it is 'a persuasion supported by other evidences and convincing arguments.' His 'inward testimony' is one evidence, while miracles, prophecies, harmony of doctrines, power of moral influences, are other evidences of the truth of revelation. Now there is no such testimony, no such evidence,—no evidence or testimony inward in the believer, or apart from such as exist without him, and are presented exteriorly to his understanding. What Dr. Ridgeley represents as an 'inward testimony,' is, in reality, the result of all the testimonies to the truth of scripture,—the effect upon the mind of all the evidences of revelation,—the persuasion or conviction that the Bible is the word of God, produced by the Holy Spirit's exhibition of the evidences to the understanding, and impressing of them on the heart.

There are just three texts of scripture (1 John v. 10; Rom. viii. 16; Gal. iv. 6.) which speak of



anything resembling 'an inward testimony;' and they all treat of a topic widely different from the evidences of inspiration. The chief of these is in the First Epistle of John; and, when rightly understood, it explains the others. Our English version greatly mars it, in consequence of translating the correlatives μαρτυρεω and μαρτυρια corresponding to 'testify' and 'testimony,' by three radically different words. Let due uniformity be observed, and the passage stands self-explained: 'There are three that bear testimony on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God, which he hath testified concerning his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the testimony in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the testimony which God gave concerning his Son. And this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.' The last of these verses is a key to the whole. The testimony of which the entire passage treats, is this, that God has given us, in his Son, everlasting life. It is a testimony, not that the Bible is of divine origin, but that, in terms which it announces, God has given man salvation: it is not a testimony in the heart with reference to the Bible, but a testimony in the Bible with reference to the heart. It is inscribed on the pages of revelation; it forms the substance of all the lessons and discoveries of scripture; and, when understood and believed, it is transcribed in the experience, and exhibited in the renovation, and life, and hope, and joy of the soul. 'He that believeth, hath the testimony in himself.' He is an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. His faith, his peace with God, his new nature, his rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, are a living inscription that 'God hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son.'

## THE TOPICS OF SCRIPTURE.

**QUESTION V.** *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

**ANSWER.** The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

THE scriptures having, in the foregoing answer, been shown to be the word of God, there is in this a general account of the contents of them. There are many great doctrines contained in them, all which may be reduced to two heads; namely, what we are to believe, and what we are to do. All religion is contained in these two things; and we may apply the words of the apostle to this case, 'Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum.'<sup>b</sup> Accordingly, as this Catechism is deduced from scripture, it contains two parts,—namely, what we are to believe, and in what instances we are to yield obedience to the law of God. That the scriptures principally teach these two things, appears from the apostle's advice to Timothy, 'Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love.'<sup>c</sup>

From the scripture's principally teaching us matters of faith and practice, we infer, that 'faith without works is dead;' or that he is not a true Christian who yields an assent to divine revelation, without a practical subjection to God in all ways of holy obedience. The apostle accordingly gives a challenge, to this effect, to those who separate faith from works: 'Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.'<sup>d</sup> On the other hand, works without faith are unacceptable. A blind obedience, or ignorant performance, of some of the external parts of religion, without the knowledge of divine truth, is no better than what the apostle calls 'bodily exercise, which profiteth little.'<sup>e</sup> We ought, therefore, if we would approve ourselves sincere Christians, to examine ourselves whether our faith be founded on, or truly deduced from scripture; and whether it be a practical faith, or, as the apostle says, such as 'worketh by love,'<sup>f</sup>—whether we grow in knowledge, as well as in zeal and diligence, in performing the duties of religion.

**QUESTION VI.** *What do the scriptures make known of God?*

**ANSWER.** The scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, the decrees and the execution of his decrees.

It is an amazing instance of condescension, and an inexpressible favour which God bestows on man, that he should not only manifest himself to him, as he does to all

mankind, by the light of nature, which discovers that he is; but that he should, in so glorious a way, as he does in his word, declare what he is. This is a distinguishing privilege. The Psalmist observes that it is such, when speaking of God's 'showing his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel;' <sup>s</sup> and he mentions it, as an instance of discriminating grace, that 'he has not dealt so with any other nation.' This raised the admiration of one of Christ's disciples, when he said, 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?' <sup>h</sup> And it is still more wonderful, that he should discover to man what he does, or rather what he has decreed or purposed to do, and so should impart his secrets to him. How familiarly does God herein deal with man! Thus he says concerning the holy patriarch of old, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?' <sup>i</sup> It is one thing, however, to know the secret purposes of God, and another thing to know the various properties of them. The former, however known of old by extraordinary intimation, are now known to us only by the execution of them: the latter may be known by a careful study of the scriptures.

Now, as the scriptures make known, First, what God is,—Secondly, the Persons in the Godhead,—Thirdly, his Decrees,—and, Fourthly, the Execution thereof; we are directed hereby in the method to be observed in treating of the great doctrines of our religion. Accordingly, the first part of this Catechism, which treats of doctrinal subjects, contains an enlargement on these four general heads,—the first of which we now proceed to consider.

## THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

### QUESTION VII. *What is God?*

ANSWER. God is a Spirit, in and of himself, infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection, all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, every where present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

### *General view of the Divine Attributes.*

BEFORE we proceed to consider the divine perfections, as stated in this answer, let it be premised, that it is impossible for any one to give a perfect description of God; since he is incomprehensible. No words can fully express, or set forth, his perfections. When the wisest men on earth speak of him, they soon betray their own weakness, or discover, as Elihu says, that they 'cannot order their speech by reason of darkness,' <sup>k</sup> or that 'they are but of yesterday, and know,' comparatively, 'nothing.' <sup>l</sup> When we speak of the infinite perfections of the divine nature, we are but like children, talking of matters above them, which their tender age can take in but little of. 'This knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain to it.' <sup>m</sup> 'How little a portion is heard of him?' <sup>n</sup>

But though God cannot be perfectly described, yet there is something of him which we may know, and ought to make the matter of our study and diligent inquiries. When his glory is set forth in scripture, we are not to look upon the expressions made use of, as words without any ideas affixed to them,—for it is one thing to have adequate ideas of an infinitely perfect being, and another thing to have no ideas at all of him; neither are our ideas of God, though imperfect, to be for this reason reckoned altogether false,—for it is one thing to think of him in an unbecoming way, not agreeable to his perfections, or to attribute the weakness and imperfection to him which do not belong to his nature, and another thing to think of him, with the highest and best conceptions we are able to entertain of his infinite perfections, while, at the same time, we have a due sense of our own weakness and the shallowness of our capacities. When we thus order our thoughts con-

g Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.

h John xiv. 22.

i Gen. xviii. 17.

k Job xxxvii. 19.

l Chap. viii. 9.

m Psal. cxxxix. 6.

Job xxvi. 14.

cerning the great God, though we are far from comprehending his infinite perfections, yet our conceptions are not to be concluded erroneous, when directed by his word.

Let us consider then, how we may conceive aright of the divine perfections, that we may not think or speak of God that which is not right, though at best we know but little of his glory. And, 1. We must first take an estimate of finite perfections, which we have some ideas of, though not perfect ones in all respects,—such as power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, &c.; then we must conceive that these are eminently, though not formally, in God. Whatever perfection is in the creature, the same is in God, and infinitely more; or it is in God, but not in such a finite, limited, or imperfect way, as it is in the creature. ‘He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall not he see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?’<sup>o</sup> 2. When the same words are used to denote a perfection in God, and in the creature, such as wisdom, power, &c., we must not suppose that they import the same thing in their different application. When they are applied to the creature, they denote properties, which, though we call them perfections, are, at best, but finite, and have many imperfections attending them,—all which we must separate or abstract in our thoughts, when the same words are used to set forth any divine perfection. Thus knowledge is a perfection of the human nature; and the word knowledge is used to denote a divine perfection; yet we must consider that ‘the Lord seeth not as man seeth.’<sup>p</sup> The same may be said of all his other perfections. He worketh not as man worketh. Whatever perfections are ascribed to the creature, are to be considered as agreeable to the subject in which they exist; and when the words denoting them are used to set forth any of the divine perfections, they are to be understood in a way becoming a God of infinite perfection.

This has given occasion to divines to distinguish the perfections of God, into those that are communicable, and those that are incommunicable. The communicable perfections of God are those some faint resemblance of which we find in intelligent creatures; though at the same time, there is an infinite disproportion. When, for example, we speak of God as holy, wise, just, powerful, or faithful, we find something like these perfections in the creature; though we are not to suppose them, in all respects, the same as they are in God. In him, they are in his own, that is, an infinite way. In us, they are in our own, that is, a finite and limited way. The incommunicable perfections of God are those of which there is not the least shadow or similitude in creatures. They rather represent him as contrasted by them. Thus when we speak of him as infinite, incomprehensible, unchangeable, without beginning, independent, &c., we ascribe to him perfections which exhibit the vast distance that there is between God and the creature, or how infinitely he exceeds all other beings, and is the opposite of every thing that argues imperfection in them. [See note Z, end of section.]

From the general account we have given of the divine perfections, we may infer, 1. That there is nothing common between God and the creature; that is, there is nothing which belongs to the divine nature which can be attributed to the creature, and nothing proper to the creature is to be applied to God. There are, however, some rays of the divine glory, which may be beheld as shining forth or displayed in the creature, especially in the intelligent part of the creation, angels and men; who are for that reason, represented as made after the divine image. 2. Let us never think or speak of the perfections of God, but with the highest reverence, lest we take his name in vain, or debase him in our thoughts. ‘Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?’<sup>q</sup> And whenever we compare God with the creatures, namely, angels and men, that bear somewhat of his image, let us abstract in our thoughts all their imperfections, whether natural or moral, from him, and consider the infinite disproportion that there is between him and them. We now come to consider the perfections of the divine nature, in the order in which they are laid down in this answer.



*The Spirituality of God.*

God is a Spirit, that is, an immaterial substance, without body, or bodily parts. This he is said to be in John iv. 24. But if it be inquired what we mean by a spirit, let it be premised, that we cannot fully understand what our own spirits or souls are, and that we know less of the nature of angels, a higher kind of spirits, and least of all the spirituality of the divine nature. In considering the nature and properties of spirits, however, our ideas begin at what is finite, and thence we are led to conceive of God as infinitely more perfect than any finite spirit.

Here we shall consider the word spirit, as applied more especially to angels, and the souls of men. A spirit is the most perfect and excellent being. The soul is more excellent than the body, or indeed than any thing that is purely material; and angels are the most perfect and glorious part of the creation, as they are spiritual beings, in some things excelling the souls of men. A spirit is in its own nature immortal: it has nothing in its frame and constitution that tends to corruption. In material things, which consist of various parts, that may be dissolved or separated, and may assume an altered form, there is what we call corruptibility. This, however, belongs not to spirits, which are liable to no change in their nature, except by the immediate hand of God, who can, if he pleases, reduce them again to nothing. A spirit is capable of understanding and willing, and of performing corresponding actions, which no other being can do. Thus, though the sun is a glorious and useful being, yet, because it is material, it is not capable of thought or any moral action, such as angels and the souls of men can perform.

Now these conceptions of the nature and properties of finite spirits, lead us to conceive of God as a Spirit. As spirits excel all other creatures, we must conclude that God is the most excellent and perfect of all beings, and also that he is 'incorruptible, immortal, and invisible,' as he is said to be in scripture.\* It follows that he has an understanding and will, and hence we may conceive of him as the creator and governor of all things. This he could not be, if he were not an intelligent and sovereign being, and particularly a Spirit. Again, the difference between other spiritual substances and God, is, that all their excellency is only comparative, or consists in their being superior in their nature and properties to all material beings; while God, as a Spirit, is infinitely more excellent, not only than all material beings, but than all created spirits. Their perfections are derived from him, and therefore he is called, 'the Father of spirits,'<sup>s</sup> and 'the God of the spirits of all flesh';<sup>t</sup> but his perfections are undervived. Other spirits are, as we have observed, in their own nature, immortal, yet God can reduce them to nothing; but God is independently immortal, and therefore it is said of him, that 'he only hath immortality.'<sup>u</sup> Finite spirits, indeed, have understanding and will, but these powers are contained within certain limits; whereas God is an infinite Spirit, and therefore it can be said of none but him, that 'his understanding is infinite.'<sup>x</sup>

From God's being a Spirit, we may infer, 1. That he is the most suitable good to the nature of our souls, which are spirits. As the God and Father of spirits, he can communicate himself to them, and apply to them those things which tend to make them happy. 2. He is to be worshipped in a spiritual manner,<sup>y</sup> that is, with our whole souls, and in a way becoming the spirituality of his nature. We are, therefore, to frame no similitude or resemblance of him in our thoughts, as though he were a corporeal or material being; neither are we to make any pictures of him. This God forbids Israel to do;<sup>z</sup> and he tells them, that they had not the least pretence for doing it, inasmuch as they 'saw no similitude of him, when he spake to them in Horeb';<sup>u</sup> he tells them also that to make an image of him would be to 'corrupt themselves.'

r Rom. i. 23. and 1 Tim. i. 17.

x Psal. cxlvii. 5.

s Heb. xii. 9.

y John iv. 24.

t Numb. xvi. 22.

z Deut. iv. 12, 15, 16.

u 1 Tim. vi. 16.

*The Self-existence of God.*

God is said to be 'in, and of, himself,' not as though he gave being to, or was the cause of himself; for that implies a contradiction. Divines, therefore, generally say, that God is 'in and of himself,' not positively, but negatively; that is, his being and perfections are underived, they are not communicated to him, as all finite perfections are by him communicated to the creature. He is self-existent, or independent; and this is one of the highest glories of his nature, by which he is distinguished from creatures, who all live, move, and have their being, in and from him.

This attribute of independence belongs to all his perfections. Thus his wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, &c. are all independent.

1. He is independent as to his knowledge or wisdom. He doth not receive ideas from any object out of himself. All intelligent creatures do this, and, in that respect, are said to depend on the object; so that if there were not any such object, they could not have the knowledge or idea of it in their minds. The object known must exist, before we can apprehend what it is. But this must not be said respecting God's knowledge; for the things which he knows cannot be supposed of as antecedent to his knowing them. The independency of his knowledge is elegantly described in scripture: 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?'<sup>a</sup>

2. He is independent in power. As he does not receive strength from any one, so he doth not act dependently on the will of the creature. 'Who hath enjoined him his way?'<sup>b</sup> Again, as he did not receive the power of acting from any one, so none can hinder, turn aside, or control his power, or put a stop to his methods of acting.

3. He is independent as to his holiness, hating sin necessarily, and not merely depending on some reasons out of himself, which induce him to hate it; for it is essential to the divine nature to be infinitely opposite to all sin, and therefore to be independently holy.

4. He is independent as to his bounty and goodness, and so he communicates blessings not by constraint, but according to his sovereign will. Thus he gave being to the world, and all things therein, which was the first instance, and a very great one, of bounty and goodness, not by constraint, but by his free will: 'For his pleasure they are and were created.' In like manner, in whatever instances he extends mercy to miserable creatures, he acts independently in displaying it. Nothing out of himself moves him or lays a constraint upon him; but he shows mercy because it is his pleasure so to do.

To evince the truth of this doctrine, that God is independent as to his being, and all his perfections, let it be considered, 1. That all things depend on his power, which brought them into, and preserves them in being. They exist by his will, as their creator and preserver, and consequently are not necessary but dependent beings. Now if all things depend on God, it is the greatest absurdity to say that God depends on any thing; for this would be to suppose the cause and the effect to be mutually dependent on, and derived from each other,—which implies a contradiction. 2. If God be infinitely above the highest creatures, he cannot depend on any of them, for dependence argues inferiority. Now that God is above all things is certain. This is represented in a very beautiful manner by the prophet, when he says, 'Behold the nations are as the drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.'<sup>c</sup> He cannot, then, be said to be inferior to them, and, by consequence, to depend on them. 3. If God depends on any creature, he does not exist necessarily,—and if so, he might not have been; for the same will, by which he is supposed to exist, might have determined that he

a Isa. xl. 13, 14.

b Job xxxvi. 23.

c Isa. xl. 15, 17.

should not have existed. And, according to the same method of reasoning, he might cease to be; for the same will that gave being to him might take it away at pleasure,—a thought which is altogether inconsistent with the idea of a God.

From God's being independent, or 'in and of himself,' we infer that the creature cannot lay any obligation on him, or do any thing that may tend to make him more happy than he is in himself. The apostle gives a challenge to this effect: 'Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?'<sup>d</sup> And Eliphaz says to Job, 'Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?'<sup>e</sup> Again, if independency be a divine perfection, let it not, in any instance, or by any consequence, be attributed to the creature. Let us conclude, that all our springs are in him, and that all we enjoy and hope for is from him, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and the fountain of all our blessedness.

### *The Infinitude of God.*

God is infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection. To be infinite, is to be without all bounds or limits, either actual or possible. Now that God is so, is evident from his being independent and uncreated, and because his will fixes the bounds of all the excellencies, perfections, and powers of the creature. If he doth not exist by the will of another, he is infinite in being, and consequently in all perfection. Hence, it is said, 'His understanding is infinite.'<sup>f</sup> His infinitude appears also in his omniscience. His will likewise determines what shall come to pass, with an infinite sovereignty, which cannot be controlled or rendered ineffectual. His power, moreover, is infinite; and therefore all things are equally possible and easy to it, nor can it be resisted by any contrary force or power. And he is infinite in blessedness, as being, from all eternity, self-sufficient, or not standing in need of any thing to make him more happy than he was in himself. The Psalmist is supposed, by many, to speak in the person of Christ, when he says, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee';<sup>g</sup> that is, "How much soever thy relative glory may be illustrated by what I have engaged to perform in the covenant of redemption, yet this can make no addition to thine essential glory." And if so, certainly nothing can be done by us which may in the least contribute to it.

### *The All-sufficiency of God.*

God is all-sufficient; or he hath enough in himself to satisfy the most enlarged desires of his creatures, and to make them completely blessed. As his self-sufficiency is that whereby he has enough in himself to constitute him completely blessed, as a God of infinite perfection; so his all-sufficiency is that whereby he is able to communicate as much blessedness to his creatures, as he is pleased to make them capable of receiving. In consequence of his all-sufficiency, he is able not only to 'supply all their wants, but to do exceedingly above all that they ask or think.'<sup>h</sup> This he can do in an immediate way. Or if he thinks fit to make use of creatures as instruments to fulfil his pleasure, and communicate what he designs to impart to us, he is never at a loss; for as they are the work of his hands, so he has a right to use them at his will,—and on this account they are all said to be 'his servants.'<sup>i</sup>

This doctrine of God's all-sufficiency should be improved by us to induce us to seek happiness in him alone. Creatures are no more than the stream, while he is the fountain. We may, in a mediate way, receive some small drops from them; but he is the ocean of all blessedness.

Let us take heed that we do not depreciate, or, in effect, deny this perfection. This we may be said to do in various instances. 1. We do it when we are discontented with our present condition, and desire more than God has allotted to us.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. xi. 35.

<sup>e</sup> Job xxii. 2, 3.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. cxlvii. 5.

<sup>g</sup> Psal. xvi. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Phil. iv. 19. and Eph. iii. 20.

<sup>i</sup> Psal. cxix. 91.



This seems to have been the sin of the fallen angels, who left their first habitation through pride, seeking more than God designed they should have; and it was the sin by which our first parents fell, desiring a greater degree of knowledge than what they thought themselves possessed of, and fancying that by eating the forbidden fruit they should be 'as gods, knowing good and evil.'<sup>k</sup> 2. We practically deny the all-sufficiency of God, when we seek blessings, of what kind soever they are, in an indirect way; as though God had not been able to bestow them upon us in his own way, or in the use of lawful means. This Rebekah and Jacob did, when they contrived a lie to obtain the blessing of Isaac;<sup>l</sup> for they acted as if there had not been an all-sufficiency in providence to bring what they desired, without their having recourse to methods which were sinful. 3. When we use unlawful means to escape imminent dangers. This David did when he feigned himself mad,—supposing, without ground, that he should have been slain by Achish king of Gath, and that there was no way to escape but by the artifice he adopted.<sup>m</sup> Abraham and Isaac also were guilty of this,<sup>n</sup> when they denied their wives, as an expedient to save their lives,—as though God had not been able to save them in a better and more honourable way. 4. When we distrust his providence, though we have had large experience of its appearing for us in various instances. This David did, when he said in his heart, 'I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul';<sup>o</sup> and the Israelites, when they said, 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?'<sup>p</sup> though he had provided for them in an extraordinary way ever since they had been there. Yea, Moses himself was faulty in the same way, when he said, 'Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me';<sup>q</sup> and Asa, when he tempted Benhadad to break his league with Baasha, who made war against him,—as though God had not been able to deliver him without this indirect practice, and as though he had not in an eminent manner appeared for him, in giving him a signal victory over Zerah the Ethiopian, when he came against him with an army of a million of men;<sup>r</sup> and likewise Joshua, when Israel had suffered a small defeat, occasioned by Achan's sin, and fled before the men of Ai, though there were but thirty-six of them slain; for on that occasion he was ready to wish that God had not brought them over Jordan, and anticipated nothing but ruin and destruction from the Amorites, forgetting God's former deliverances, and distrusting his faithfulness and his care of his people, and, as it were, calling in question his all-sufficiency, as though he were not able to accomplish the promises he had made to them.<sup>s</sup> 5. When we doubt of the truth, or the certain accomplishment, of his promises; and so are ready to say, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Doth his truth fail for ever?' This we are apt to do, when there are great difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of them. Thus Sarah, when it was told her that she should have a child in her old age, laughed through unbelief;<sup>t</sup> and God intimates, that her conduct was an affront to his all-sufficiency, for he says, 'Is any thing too hard for the Lord?'<sup>u</sup> Gideon, in the same way, though he was told that God was with him, and though he had an express command to go in his might, with a promise that he should deliver Israel from the Midianites, yet says, 'O Lord, wherewith shall I save them? for my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.'<sup>x</sup> He was told again by God, 'I will be with thee, and smite the Midianites';<sup>y</sup> yet, afterwards, he desires that he would give him a sign in the wet and dry fleece. What was this but questioning his all-sufficiency? 6. When under pretence of our unfitness for them, we decline great services, though called to them by God. Thus when the prophet Jeremiah was called to deliver the Lord's message to the rebellious house of Israel, he desired to be excused, and said, 'Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child'; whereas the main discouragement was the difficulty of the work, and the hazards he would probably run. But God encourages him to it, by putting him in mind of his all-sufficiency, when he tells him, that 'he would be with him, and deliver him.'<sup>z</sup>

<sup>k</sup> Gen. iii. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. xxvii.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Sam. xxi. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. chapters xx. and xxvi.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 19.

<sup>q</sup> Numb. xi. 13, 14.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. xvi. 3. com-

pared with chap. xiv. 9, 12.

<sup>s</sup> Josh. vii. 7, 8, 9.

<sup>t</sup> Gen. xviii. 12.

<sup>u</sup> Ver. 14.

<sup>x</sup> Judges vi. 15.

<sup>y</sup> Ver. 16.

<sup>z</sup> Jer. i. 6. compared with ver. 8.

The all-sufficiency of God affords matter of support and encouragement to believers, under the greatest straits and difficulties they are exposed to in this world. We have many instances in scripture of believers having had recourse to it in such circumstances. Thus, when David was in the greatest strait that ever he met with—when upon the Amalekites spoiling Ziklag, and carrying away the women captives, the people talked of stoning him, and all things seemed to make against him, ‘he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.’<sup>a</sup> Mordecai, in the same way, was confident that ‘the enlargement and deliverance’ of the Jews should be accomplished by some other means, if not by Esther’s intercession for them, when she was afraid to go in to the king;<sup>b</sup> and, considering the present posture of their affairs, he could never have this confidence without a due regard to God’s all-sufficiency. Moreover, it was this divine perfection which encouraged Abraham to obey the difficult command to offer up his son; as the apostle observes, he did this as knowing ‘that God was able to raise him from the dead.’<sup>c</sup> And when believers are under the greatest distress from the assaults of their spiritual enemies, they have a warrant from God, as the apostle had, to encourage themselves that they shall come off victorious, because ‘his grace is sufficient for them.’<sup>d</sup>

### *The Eternity of God.*

God is eternal. He was without beginning, and shall be without end. His duration is unchangeable, or without succession, the same from everlasting to everlasting. Hence the Psalmist says, ‘Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.’<sup>e</sup>

1. God is from everlasting. This appears, from his being a necessary, self-existent Being, or from his existing in and of himself; for whatever is not produced is from eternity. That he did not derive his being from any one, is evident from his having given being to all things, which is implied in their being creatures. Nothing gave being to him; and consequently he was from eternity.

Again, if he is an infinitely perfect being, as has been observed before, then his duration is infinitely perfect; and consequently it is boundless, that is to say, eternal. It is an imperfection, in all created beings, that they began to exist; and hence they are said, in a comparative sense, to be but of yesterday. We must, therefore, when we conceive of God, separate this imperfection from him, and so conclude that he was from all eternity.

Farther, if he created all things in the beginning, then he was before the beginning of time, that is, from eternity. It is said, ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.’<sup>f</sup> Time is a successive duration, taking its rise from a certain point, or moment, which we call the beginning. Now that duration, which was before this, must be from eternity; unless we suppose that there was time before time began, or that there was a successive duration before successive duration began,—which is a contradiction. Hence, if God, as their Creator, fixed a beginning to all things, and particularly to time, which is the measure of the duration of all created beings, then it is evident that he was before time, and consequently from eternity.

That God is from everlasting appears also from scripture; as when it is said, ‘The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms;’<sup>g</sup> and when we read of his ‘eternal power and Godhead;’<sup>h</sup> and elsewhere, ‘Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God?’<sup>i</sup> ‘Thy throne is established of old; thou art from everlasting.’<sup>k</sup> His attributes and perfections also are said to have been from everlasting: ‘The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.’<sup>l</sup>

That God is from everlasting, may be proved, further, from many scripture-consequences. Thus, there was an election of persons to holiness and happiness, ‘before the foundation of the world.’<sup>m</sup> Christ, in particular, ‘was fore-ordained’ to

a 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

e Psal. xc. 2.

i Hab. i. 12.

b Esth. iv. 14.

f Gen. i. 1.

k Psal. xciii. 2.

c Heb. xi. 19.

g Deut. xxxiii. 27.

l Psal. ciii. 17.

d 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

h Rom. i. 20.

m Eph. i. 4.



be our mediator 'before the foundation of the world;'<sup>o</sup> and was 'set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.'<sup>p</sup> It follows, that there was a sovereign fore-ordaining will; and therefore God, whose will it was, existed before the foundation of the world, that is, from everlasting. Moreover, there were grants of grace given in Christ, or put into his hand, from all eternity. Thus we read of 'eternal life, which God promised before the world began;'<sup>q</sup> and of our being 'saved, according to his purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.'<sup>r</sup> From this it follows, that there was an eternal giver, and consequently that God was from everlasting.

2. God shall be to everlasting. Accordingly it is said, 'The Lord shall endure for ever;'<sup>s</sup> 'he liveth for ever and ever;'<sup>t</sup> 'his years shall have no end;'<sup>u</sup> and 'the Lord shall reign for ever;'<sup>x</sup> therefore he must endure to everlasting. Again, it is said, 'the Lord keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, to a thousand generations;'<sup>y</sup> and 'he will ever be mindful of his covenant,'<sup>z</sup> that is, will fulfil what he has promised therein. Now, if his truth shall not fail for ever, then he who will accomplish what he has spoken, must endure to everlasting.

But that he shall endure for ever may be farther evinced from the perfections of his nature. His necessary existence not only argues, as has been before observed, that he could not begin to be, but equally proves that he cannot cease to be, or that he shall be to everlasting.—Again, He is void of all composition, and therefore must be to everlasting. None but compounded beings, namely, such as have parts, are subject to dissolution; which arises from the contrariety of the parts, and their tendency to destroy one another,—a contrariety and tendency which occasion their dissolution. But God having no parts, as he is the most simple uncompounded being, there can be nothing in him that tends to dissolution; so that he can never have an end from any necessity of nature. [See note 2 A, page 124.]—Further, He must be to eternity, because there is no one superior to him, at whose will he exists, who can deprive him of his being and glory.—Lastly, He cannot will his own destruction, or non-existence; for to do so would be contrary to the universal nature of things. No being can desire to be less perfect than it is; much less can any one will or desire his own annihilation. No one, especially, who is possessed of blessedness, can will the loss of it, for to do so is incongruous with the nature of it as a desirable good. God, therefore, cannot will the loss of his own blessedness; and since his blessedness is inseparably connected with his being, he cannot cease to be, from an act of his own will. Now, if he cannot cease to be, from any necessity of nature, or from the will of another, or from an act of his own will, he must be to eternity.

The eternity of God, as to both the past and the future, may still further be proved from his other perfections; since one of the divine perfections infers the other.—First, it may be proved from his immutability. He is unchangeable in his being; he is, in consequence, unchangeable also in all his perfections; and therefore, he must be always the same from everlasting to everlasting, and not proceed from a state of non-existence to that of being, which he would have done, had he not been from everlasting, nor decline from a state of being to that of non-existence, which he would be supposed to do, were he not to everlasting. Either of these is the greatest change that can be supposed, and therefore inconsistent with the divine immutability.—Again, He is the first cause, and the ultimate end of all things. He must, therefore, be from eternity, and remain the fountain of all blessedness to eternity.—Further, He could not be almighty, or infinite in power, if he were not eternal. That being which did not always exist, once could not act, that is, when it did not exist; and he that may cease to be, may, for the same reason, be disabled from acting. Both of these consequences are inconsistent with almighty power.—Lastly, If he were not eternal, he could not, by way of eminence, be called, as he is, 'the living God,'<sup>a</sup> or said 'to have life in himself;'<sup>b</sup> for both these expressions imply his necessary existence, and that argues his eternity.

3. God's eternal duration is without succession, as well as without beginning and

<sup>o</sup> 1 Pet. i. 20.

<sup>t</sup> Rev. iv. 9, 10.

<sup>a</sup> Jer. x. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Prov. viii. 23.

<sup>u</sup> Psal. cii. 27.

<sup>b</sup> John v. 26.

<sup>q</sup> Tit. i. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Psal. cxlvi. 10.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Tim. i. 9.

<sup>y</sup> Deut. vii. 9.

<sup>s</sup> Psal. ix. 7.

<sup>z</sup> Psal. cxi. 5.



end. That it is so, appears from his being unchangeable. All successive duration infers change. Thus, the duration of creatures, which is successive, is not the same one moment as it will be the next; every moment adds something to it. But this cannot be said of God's duration. Besides, successive duration implies a being what we were not in all respects before, and a ceasing to be what we were; and so it is a kind of continual passing from not being to being,—which is inconsistent with God's perfections, and, in particular, with his unchangeable duration. The Psalmist, speaking of God's eternal duration, describes it by its immutability: 'Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end;'<sup>c</sup> and the apostle, speaking concerning it, says, 'He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'<sup>d</sup> Moreover, successive duration is applicable to time. The duration of all creatures is measured, and therefore cannot be termed infinite. It is measured by its successive parts: thus a day, a year, an age, a million of ages, are measured by the number of moments of which they consist. But God's duration is unmeasured, that is, infinite; it is, therefore, without succession, or without those parts of which time consists.

4. Eternity is an attribute peculiar to God; and hence we call it an incommunicable perfection. There are, indeed, other things that shall endure to everlasting,—as angels, and the souls of men,—also those heavenly bodies that shall remain after the creature is delivered from the bondage of corruption, to which it is now subject,—and likewise the heavenly places, designed for the seat of the blessed; but the everlasting duration of these things infinitely differs from the eternity of God. As all finite things began to be, and their duration is successive, so their everlasting existence depends entirely on the power and will of God, and therefore cannot be called necessary or independent, as his eternal existence is.

It may, perhaps, seem inconsistent with the account that has been given of his eternity, that the various parts of time, as days, years, &c. and the various changes of time, as past, present, and to come, are sometimes attributed to God. Such expressions, it is true, are often used in scripture. Thus he is called, 'the Ancient of days';<sup>e</sup> and his eternity is expressed, by 'his years having no end';<sup>f</sup> and it is said, 'He was, is, and is to come.'<sup>g</sup> But, for the understanding of such expressions, we must consider that in using them God is pleased to speak according to our weak capacity, who cannot comprehend the manner of his infinite duration. We cannot conceive of any duration but that which is successive; therefore God speaks to us, as he does in many other instances, in condescension to our capacities. But yet we may observe, that though he thus condescends to speak concerning himself, there is often something added which distinguishes his duration from that of creatures; as when it is said, 'Behold, God is great, and we know him not; neither can the number of his years be searched out.'<sup>h</sup> Hence, though we read of the years of his duration, yet they are such as are unsearchable, or incomprehensible, infinitely differing from years as applied to created beings. Thus it is said, 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past.'<sup>i</sup> 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'<sup>k</sup> And, by the same method of reasoning, it may be said one moment is with the Lord as a thousand millions of ages, or a thousand millions of ages as one moment. Such is his duration; and therefore it is not properly successive, like that of creatures. Again, when any thing past, present, or to come, is attributed to God, it signifies either that he is so as to his works, which are finite, and measured by successive duration; or that he whose duration is not measured by succession, notwithstanding, exists unchangeably, through all the various ages of time. As he is omnipresent with all the parts of matter, yet has no parts himself; so he exists in all the successive ages of time, but without that succession which is peculiar to time and creatures.

Several things may be inferred, of a practical nature, from the eternity of God. Since his duration is eternal, that is, without succession, so that there is no such thing as past or to come with him,—since ten thousand millions of ages are but like a moment to him,—it follows that those sins which we committed long ago,

<sup>c</sup> Psal. cii. 27.  
and chap. iv. 8.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.  
<sup>h</sup> Job xxxvi 26.

<sup>e</sup> Dan. vii. 9.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. cii. 27.  
<sup>i</sup> Psal. xc. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Rev. i. 4.  
<sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 8.

and which perhaps are forgotten by us, are present to his view. He knows what we have done against him ever since we had a being in this world, as much as though we were at present committing them.—Again, if God was from eternity, how contemptible is all created glory when compared with his! Look but a few ages backward, and it was nothing. This consideration should humble the pride of the creature, who is but of yesterday, and whose duration is nothing, and less than nothing, when compared with God's.—Further, the eternity of God, as being to everlasting, affords matter of terror to his enemies, and of comfort to his people, and, as such, should be improved for the preventing of sin. It affords matter of terror to his enemies. For he ever lives to see his threatenings executed, and to pour forth the vials of his fury on them. Accordingly, the prophet speaking of God as 'the everlasting King,' says, that 'at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.'<sup>1</sup> The eternity of God argues the eternity of the punishment of sin; since this great Judge, who is a consuming fire to impenitent sinners, will live for ever to see his threatenings executed upon them; and as he is eternal in his being, he must be so in his power, holiness, justice, and all his other perfections, which are terrible to his enemies. Hence the Psalmist says, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath;'<sup>m</sup> and the apostle says, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'<sup>n</sup> But the doctrine of God's eternity affords, on the other hand, matter of comfort to believers. It is a refuge to them from the fluctuating and uncertain enjoyments which are connected with the creature; and it is an encouragement under the loss of friends and relations, and under all the other losses and disappointments which they meet with, as to their outward state in this world. These are, at best, but short-lived comforts; but God is 'the eternal portion' and happiness of his people.<sup>o</sup> And from his eternity, they may certainly conclude, that the happiness of the heavenly state will be eternal; for it consists in the enjoyment of him, who is so,—a thought which is very delightful to all who are enabled by faith to cherish it.

### *The Immutability of God.*

God is immutable. 'With him is no variableness neither shadow of turning.'<sup>p</sup> His immutability is sometimes set forth in a metaphorical way; in which respect he is compared to a 'rock.'<sup>q</sup> As this remains immovable, when the whole ocean that surrounds it is continually in a fluctuating state; so, though all creatures are subject to change, God alone is unchangeable in his being, and in all his perfections.

I. We shall consider how immutability is a perfection, and how it is a perfection peculiar to God.

It must be allowed that immutability cannot be said to be an excellency or perfection, unless it be applied to, or spoken of, what is good. An immutable state of sin or of misery, as found in fallen angels or wicked men, is far from being an excellency. But unchangeable holiness and happiness, as found in holy angels, or saints in heaven, is a perfection conferred upon them. And when we speak of God's immutability, we suppose him infinitely blessed,—which is included in the notion of a God; and so we farther say, that he is unchangeable in all those perfections in which it consists.

Immutability belongs, in the most proper sense, to God alone; so that 'as he only' is said 'to have immortality,'<sup>r</sup> that is, such as is underived and independent,—he alone is unchangeable. Other things are rendered immutable by an act of his will and power; but immutability is an essential perfection of the divine nature. Creatures are dependently immutable; God is independently so.

The most perfect creatures, such as angels and glorified saints, are capable of new additions to their blessedness. New objects may be presented as occasions of praise, which tend perpetually to increase their happiness. The angels know more than they did before Christ's incarnation; for they are said to know 'by the church,'

<sup>1</sup> Jer. x. 10.

<sup>m</sup> Psal. xc. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Heb. x. 31.

<sup>o</sup> Psal. lxxiii. 26.

<sup>p</sup> James i. 17.

<sup>q</sup> Deut. xxxii. 4.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 16.



that is, by the dealings of God with his church, 'the manifold wisdom of God,'<sup>s</sup> and to 'desire to look into' the account the gospel gives of the 'sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;' and they shall have farther additions to their blessedness, when all the elect are joined to their assembly in the great day. Hence the happiness of the best creatures is communicated in various degrees. God's perfections and blessedness, on the contrary, can have no additions made to them. He, therefore, is immutable in a sense in which no creature is.

II. We shall now prove that God is immutable in his being, and in all his perfections.

1. He is immutable in his being. Immutability in this belongs to him as God, and consequently to him alone. All other beings once were not; there has been in them, if I may so express it, a change from a state of non-existence to that of being; and the same power that brought them into being, could reduce them again to nothing. To be dependent, is to be subject to change at the will of another, and belongs to all finite things. Hence it is said, 'As a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed;' while God, being opposed to them as independent, is said to be 'the same.'<sup>u</sup>

God did not change from a state of non-existence to being; inasmuch as he was from everlasting, and therefore necessarily existent. He consequently cannot change from a state of being to that of non-existence, or cease to be. And because his perfections, in the same sense as his being is, are essential to him, and undervived, there can be no change in them.

Again, he cannot change from a state of greater to a state of less perfection, or be subject to the least diminution of his divine perfections. To suppose this possible, is to suppose that he may cease to be infinitely perfect,—that is, that he may cease to be God. Nor can he change from a state of less perfection to a state of greater; for that is to suppose him not to be infinitely perfect before this change, or that there are degrees of infinite perfection. Nor can he pass from that state in which he is, to another of equal perfection; for, as such a change implies an equal proportion of loss and gain, so it would argue a plurality of infinite beings; or as he who was God before this change, was distinct from what he arrives to after it, the change would be contrary to the unity of the divine essence.

Moreover, if there were any change in God, it must arise either from himself, or from some other. But it cannot be from himself; for he exists necessarily, and not as the result of his own will, and therefore cannot will any alteration or change in himself. To suppose that he could, is contrary also to the nature of infinite blessedness, which cannot desire the least diminution, as it cannot apprehend any necessity for it. And then he cannot be changed by any other; for he that changes any other, must be greater than him whom he changes. Nor can he be subject to the will of another, who is superior to him; for there is none equal, much less superior, to God. There is, therefore, no being that can add to, or take from, his perfections.

2. God is immutable in his knowledge. 'He seeth not as man seeth.' His knowledge is independent of the objects known; so that whatever changes there are in them, there is none in him. Things known are considered, either as past, present, or to come, and are not known by us in the same way; for concerning things past, it must be said, that we once knew them, and concerning things to come, that we shall know them hereafter. But God, with one view, comprehends all things past and future, as though they were present.

If God's knowledge were not unchangeable, he might be said to have different thoughts or apprehensions of things, at one time, from what he has at another; and this would argue a defect of wisdom. A change of sentiments implies ignorance, or weakness of understanding; for to make advances in knowledge, supposes a degree of ignorance, and to decline therein, is to be reduced to a state of ignorance. Now it is certain, that both these are inconsistent with the infinite perfection of the divine mind, and cannot be attributed to him who is called, 'The only wise God.'<sup>x</sup>

<sup>s</sup> Eph. iii. 10.

<sup>t</sup> 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

<sup>u</sup> Psal. cii. 26, 27.

<sup>x</sup> 1 Tim. i. 17



Moreover, a possibility of God's knowledge being changed, would infer a change of his will ; since having changed his sentiments, he must be supposed to alter his resolutions and purposes. But his will is unchangeable ; and, therefore, his understanding or knowledge is so. This leads us to prove,

3. That God is unchangeable in his will. It is said of him, ' He is in one mind, and who can turn him ? ' <sup>y</sup> This is agreeable to his infinite perfection. He does not purpose to do a thing at one time, and determine not to do it at another. The revelation of his will, it is true, may be changed ; and that may be rendered a duty at one time, which was not at another. Thus the ordinances of the ceremonial law were in force from Moses' time to Christ's ; but after that they were abolished, and ceased to be ordinances. There may thus be a change in the things willed, or in the external revelation of God's will, and in our duty founded thereon, when there is, at the same time, no change in his purpose ; for he determines all changes in the external dispensation of his providence and grace, without the least shadow of change in his own will.

This may farther appear, if we consider that if the will of God were not unchangeable, he could not be the object of trust. For how could we depend on his promises, were it possible for him to change his purpose ? Neither would his threatenings be so much regarded, if there were any ground to expect, from the mutability of his nature, that he would not execute them. All religion would in consequence be banished out of the world.

Again, Any changeableness in the will of God, would render the condition of the best men, in some respects, very uncomfortable. They might be one day the object of his love, and the next of his hatred ; and those blessings which accompany salvation might be bestowed at one time, and taken away at another. But such things are directly contrary to scripture ; which asserts, that ' the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. ' <sup>z</sup>

Farther, None of those things which occasion a change in the purposes of men, can have any place in God ; and there is, therefore, nothing in him that, in the least degree, can lead him to change his will, or determination, with respect to events. Men change their purposes, from a natural fickleness and inconstancy,—there being mutability in their very nature ; but God, being unchangeable in his nature, must be so in his purpose or will. Men often change their purposes, in making but not fulfilling their promises ; or, as we say, in being worse than their word, from the viciousness and depravity of their nature ; but God is infinitely holy, and therefore, in this respect, cannot change. Men change their purposes, for want of power to bring about what they designed,—a want of power, which has hindered many well-concerted projects from taking effect in some, and many threatenings from being executed in others ; but God's will cannot be frustrated for want of power to do what he designed, inasmuch as he is almighty. Men often change their purposes for want of foresight—something unexpected occurs, which argues a defect of wisdom, and renders it expedient for them to alter their purpose ; but with God, who is infinitely wise, nothing unforeseen can intervene to induce him to change his purpose. Men, in fine, are sometimes obliged to change their purposes by the influence, threatenings, or other methods, used by some superior ; but there is none equal, much less superior, to God, and consequently none who can lay any obligation on him to change his purpose.

### *The Incomprehensibility of God.*

God is incomprehensible. This implies that his perfections cannot be fully known by any creature. Thus it is said, ' Canst thou by searching find out God ? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? ' <sup>a</sup>

When we consider God as incomprehensible, we not only mean that man, in this imperfect state, cannot fully comprehend his glory,—for we can comprehend but very little, comparatively, of finite things, and much less of that which is infinite ; but we mean, that the best of creatures, in the most perfect state, cannot fully

conceive of or describe his glory. The reason is, that they are finite, while his perfections are infinite; and there is no proportion between an infinite God and a finite mind. As easily might the water of the ocean be contained in the hollow of the hand, or the dust of the earth weighed in a balance, as the best of creatures could have a perfect and adequate idea of the divine perfections.

On this subject we generally distinguish between apprehending and comprehending. The former denotes our having some imperfect or inadequate ideas of what surpasses our understanding; the latter, our knowing every thing that is contained in it, or our having an adequate idea of it. Now we apprehend something of the divine perfections, in proportion to the limits of our capacities, and our present state; but we are not, and never shall be, able to comprehend the divine glory,—God being incomprehensible to every one but himself.—Again, we farther distinguish between our having a full conviction that God hath those infinite perfections, which no creature can comprehend, and our being able fully to describe them. Thus we firmly believe that God exists throughout all the changes of time, and yet that his duration is not measured thereby; or that he fills all places, and yet is not co-extended with matter. We apprehend, as having undeniable demonstration of it, that he does so; though we cannot comprehend how he does it.

### *The Omnipresence of God.*

God is omnipresent. This is elegantly set forth by the Psalmist, ‘Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.’<sup>b</sup> The omnipresence of God doth not consist merely, as some suppose, in his knowing what is done in heaven and earth. This is only a metaphorical sense of omnipresence; as when Elisha tells Gehazi, ‘Went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?’<sup>c</sup> or as the apostle says to the church at Corinth, that ‘though he was absent in body, yet he was present with them in spirit;’<sup>d</sup> or as we say, that our souls are with our friends in distant places, as often as we think of them. Nor doth this perfection consist in God’s being omnipresent by his authority, as a king is said, by a figurative way of speaking, to be present in all parts of his dominions, where persons are deputed to act under him, or by his authority. We must take omnipresence in a proper sense; and understand by it that God fills all places with his presence,<sup>e</sup> and is not confined to or excluded from any place. He is thus omnipresent, not by parts, as the world or the universe is said to be omnipresent; for such an omnipresence is agreeable only to things corporeal, and compounded of parts, and is by no means attributable to deity. [See note 2 B, page 124.]

This is a doctrine which it is impossible for us to comprehend; yet we are bound to believe it, because the contrary to it is inconsistent with infinite perfection. It is sometimes called his essential presence, to distinguish it from his influential presence. By the latter, he is said to be where he acts in the methods of his providence; and it is either common or special. By his common influential presence, he upholds and governs all things; and by his special he exerts his power in a way of grace. As his omnipresence, or immensity, is necessary, and not the result of his will, so his influential presence is arbitrary, and an instance of infinite condescension. In respect to it he is said to be, or not to be, in particular places,—to come to, or depart from, his people; sometimes, to dwell in heaven, as he displays his glory there agreeably to the heavenly state; at other times, to dwell with his church on earth, when he communicates to them those blessings which they stand in need of.

b Psal. cxxxix. 7—10.

c 2 Kings. v 26.

d 1 Cor. v. 3.

e Jer. xxiii. 24



*The Omnipotence of God.*

God is almighty.<sup>f</sup> If he is infinite in all his other perfections, he must be so in power. Thus, if he be omniscient, he knows what is possible or expedient to be done; and if he be an infinite sovereign, he wills whatever shall come to pass. Now his knowledge would be insignificant, and his will inefficacious, were he not infinite in power, or almighty. Again, his omnipotence might be argued from his justice, either in rewarding or in punishing; for if he were not infinite in power, he could do neither of these, at least so far as to render him the object of that desire, or fear, which is agreeable to the nature of these perfections. Neither without omnipotence, could infinite faithfulness accomplish all the promises which he hath made, so as to excite that trust and dependence, which is a part of religious worship; nor could he say, without limitation, as he does, 'I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.'<sup>g</sup>

But since power is visible in and demonstrated by its effects, and infinite power by those effects which cannot be produced by a creature, we may observe the almighty power of God in all his works, both of nature and of grace. His 'eternal power is understood,' as the apostle says, 'by the things that are made,'<sup>h</sup>—not that there was an eternal production of things, but that the exerting of creative power in time proves it to be infinite and truly divine; for no creature can produce the smallest particle of matter out of nothing, much less furnish the various species of creatures with those endowments in which they excel one another, and set forth their Creator's glory. And the glory of his power is no less visible in the works of providence, whereby he upholds all things, disposes of them according to his pleasure, and brings about events which only he who has an almighty arm can effect. These things might have been enlarged on, as evident proofs of this divine perfection. But since the works of creation and providence will be particularly considered in their proper place,<sup>i</sup> we shall proceed to consider the power of God, as appearing in his works of grace.

1. The power of God appears in some things subservient to our redemption; as in the formation of the human nature of Christ, which is ascribed to 'the power of the highest,'<sup>k</sup>—and in preserving it from being crushed, overcome, and trampled on, by the united powers of hell and earth. 'The arm of God,' it is said, 'strengthened him,' so that 'the enemy should not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him.'<sup>l</sup> It was the power of God that bore him up under all the terrible views he had of sufferings and death,—sufferings which had many ingredients in them that rendered them, beyond expression, formidable, and would have sunk a mere creature, unassisted by divine power, into destruction. It was by the divine power, which he calls 'the finger of God,'<sup>m</sup> that he cast out devils, and wrought many other miracles, to confirm his mission. Accordingly, when he 'rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child,' it is said, 'they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.'<sup>n</sup> It was by the divine power also which, as thus displayed, is called 'the exceeding greatness of the power of God,'<sup>o</sup>—that 'he was raised from the dead;' and accordingly he was 'declared to be the Son of God, with power,' by this extraordinary event.<sup>p</sup> Moreover, the power of God will be glorified, in the highest degree, in his second coming, when, as he says, he will appear 'in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.'<sup>q</sup>

2. The power of God eminently appears in the propagation of the gospel. That a doctrine so contrary to the corrupt inclinations of mankind, and which had so little to recommend it but what was divine, should be spread throughout the greatest part of the known world, by a small number of men, who, in order to this end, were spirited to act above themselves, and furnished with extraordinary qualifications, such as the gift of tongues and a power to work miracles, is a convincing proof that the power by which all this was done is infinite. It was by this power that they were inspired with wisdom, by which they not only silenced and con-

f Rev. i. 8, chap. iv. 8.

g Isa. xlvii. 11.

h Rom. i. 20.

i Quest. xv. and xviii.

k Luke i. 35.

l Psal. lxxxix. 21, 22.

m Luke xi. 20.

n Chap. ix. 42, 43.

o Eh. i. 19.

p Rom. i. 4.

q Matt. xxiv. 30.



founded their malicious enemies, but persuaded others to believe what they were sent to impart to them. It was by this that they were inflamed with zeal, in proportion to the greatness of the occasion, and fortified with courage to despise the threats, and patiently to bear the persecuting rage, of those who pursued them unto bonds and death. It was by this that they were enabled to finish their course with joy, and seal the doctrines they delivered with their blood. And the power of God was the more remarkably displayed, that they were not men of the greatest natural sagacity or resolution; and they always confessed, that whatever there was extraordinary in the course of their ministry, was from the hand of God.

3. The power of God appears in the success of the gospel; the report of which would never have been believed, had not 'the arm of the Lord been revealed.'<sup>o</sup> An eminent instance of this occurs in the greatness of the multitude which were converted to Christianity in one age. The profession which these made was contrary to their secular interests, and exposed them to the same persecution, though in a less degree, which the apostles themselves met with; yet they willingly parted with their worldly substance, when the necessity of affairs required it, and were content to have all things common, that the work might proceed with more success. It was the power of God that touched their hearts; and its internal influence contributed more to the work of grace, than all the rhetoric of man could have done. It was this that carried them through all the opposition of cruel mockings, bonds, and imprisonment, and, at the same time, compensated all their losses and sufferings, by those extraordinary joys and supports which they had, both in life and death. Moreover, the daily success of the gospel, in all the instances of converting grace, is an evident effect and proof of the divine power. This will farther appear when, under a following head, we consider effectual calling, as the work of God's almighty power and grace.<sup>p</sup>

It will be objected, that there are some things which God cannot do; and that, therefore, he is not almighty. It is true, there are some things that God cannot do; but the reason is, either that to do them would be contrary to his divine perfections, or that they are not the objects of power. It is not an imperfection in him that he cannot do them, but rather a branch of his glory.—First, there are some things which he cannot do, not because he has not power to do them, had he pleased, but only because he has willed or determined not to do them. If we should say that he cannot make more worlds, we do not mean that he wants infinite power, but we merely suppose that he has determined not to make them. He cannot save the reprobate, or fallen angels, not because he wants power, but because he has willed not to save them. In this, the power of God is distinguished from that of the creature. We never say that a person cannot do a thing, merely because he will not, but because he wants power, if he would. But this is by no means to be said, in any instance of God. We must distinguish therefore between his absolute and his ordinate power. By the former he could do many things, which by the latter he will not; and consequently to say he cannot do those things which he has determined not to do, does not in the least impugn the attribute of almighty power. [See Note 2 C, page 124.]—Again, God cannot do that which is contrary to the nature of things, when there is, in the things themselves, an impossibility that they should be done. Thus he cannot make a creature to be independent; for independence is contrary to the idea of a creature. Nor can he make a creature equal to himself; for then it would not be a creature. It is also impossible that he should make a creature to be, and not to be, at the same time, or render that not done, which is done; for that is contrary to the nature and truth of things. We may add, that he cannot make a creature the object of religious worship, or, by his power, advance him to such a dignity as shall warrant any one's ascribing divine perfections to him.—Farther, He cannot deny himself. 'It is impossible for God to lie';<sup>q</sup> and it is equally impossible for him to act contrary to any of his perfections. For this reason, he cannot do any thing which argues weakness,—for instance, he cannot repent, or change his mind, or eternal purpose. Nor can he do any thing which would argue him not to be a holy God.—Now that God can do none of these things, is no defect

in him, but rather a glory; since they are not the objects of power, but would argue weakness and imperfection in him, should he do them.

We shall now consider what practical improvement we ought to make of this divine attribute.

The almighty power of God affords great support and relief to believers, when they are assailed, and afraid of being overcome, by their spiritual enemies. Hence when they 'wrestle,' as the apostle says, 'not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places;' and when they consider what numbers have been overcome and ruined by them, and are discouraged very much, under a sense of their own weakness, or of their inability to maintain their ground against them; let them consider that God is able to bruise Satan under their feet, and to make them more than conquerors, and to cause all grace to abound in them, and to work in them that which is pleasing in his sight.

The consideration of God's almighty power, also gives us the greatest ground to conclude, that whatever difficulties seem to lie in the way of the accomplishment of his promises, relating to our future blessedness, shall be removed or surmounted: Things, which seem impossible, if we look no farther than second causes, or the little appearance there is, at present, of their being brought about, are not only of possible but of very easy accomplishment by the power of God. With respect to those who are sinking into despair, under a sense of the guilt or power of sin, and who are ready to conclude that their burden is too great to be removed by any finite power, let them consider that to God all things are possible. He can, by his powerful word, raise the most dejected spirits, and turn the shadow of death into a bright morning of peace and joy. Moreover, if we consider the declining state of religion in the world, the apostacy of some professors, the degeneracy of others, and what reason the best of them have to say, that it is not with them as in times past; or if we consider what little hope there is, from the present view of things, that the work of God will be revived in his church; yea, if the state of it were, in all appearance, as hopeless as it was when God, in a vision, represented it to the prophet Ezekiel, showing him the valley full of dry bones, and asking him, 'Can these bones live?' or if the question be put, Can the despised, declining, sinking, and dying interest of Christ be revived? or how can those prophecies which relate to the church's future happiness and glory ever have their accomplishment in this world, when all things seem to make against it? every difficulty will be removed, and our hope encouraged, when we contemplate the power of God, to which nothing is difficult, much less insuperable.

A consideration of the power of God will remove likewise all the difficulties that lie in our way, with respect to the resurrection of the dead. This is a doctrine which seems contrary to the course of nature; and, if we look no farther than the power of the creature, we shall be inclined to say, How can this be? But when we consider the almighty power of God, all objections which can be brought against it will be sufficiently removed. Accordingly, when our Saviour proves this doctrine, he exposes the absurd notions which some entertained respecting it, by saying, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.'

Let us have a due regard to this attribute, and take encouragement from it, when we are engaging in holy duties, and are sensible of our inability to perform them in a right manner. When we have too much reason to complain of an unbecoming frame of spirit, of the hardness and impenitency of our hearts, the obstinacy and perverseness of our wills, the earthliness and carnality of our affections, and when all the endeavours we can use to bring ourselves into a better frame have not their desired success; let us encourage ourselves with this consideration, that God can make us 'willing in the day of his power,' and 'do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'

But let us take heed that we do not abuse, or practically deny, or cast contempt on, this divine perfection, by presuming that we can obtain spiritual blessings, without dependence on God for them, or by expecting divine influences, while we



continue in the neglect of his instituted means of grace. God, it is true, can work without means; but he has not given us ground to expect that he will do so. When, therefore, we seek help from him, it must be in his own way. Again, let us take heed that we do not abuse this divine perfection, by a distrust of God, or by dependence on an arm of flesh. Let us not, on the one hand, limit the Holy One of Israel, by saying, Can God do this or that for me, with respect either to spiritual or to temporal concerns? nor, on the other hand, rest in any thing short of him, as though omnipotence were not an attribute peculiar to himself. As he is able to do great things for us that we looked not for; so he is much displeased when we expect blessings from any one short of himself. 'Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man, that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth?'<sup>z</sup>

### *The Omniscience of God.*

God knows all things. It has been before considered, that his being a Spirit implies his having an understanding, as a Spirit is an intelligent being. His being an infinite Spirit, therefore, must argue that 'his understanding is infinite.'<sup>a</sup>—His omniscience farther appears from his having given being to all things at first, and from his continually upholding them. He must necessarily know his own workmanship, the effects of his power. This is especially evident, if we consider the creation of all things, as a work of infinite wisdom, which is plainly discernible therein, as well as of almighty power. He must know all things; for wisdom supposes knowledge. Moreover, his being the proprietor of all things, results from his having created them; and certainly he must know his own.—His omniscience appears, again, from his governing all things, or from his so ordering them in subserviency to valuable ends, that all shall redound to his glory. Both the ends and the means must be known by him. The governing of intelligent creatures, in particular, supposes knowledge. As the Judge of all, he must be able to discern the cause, else he cannot determine it,—and perfectly to know the rules of justice, else he cannot exercise it in the government of the world.—Moreover, God's knowing all things, appears from his knowing himself; for he that knows the greatest object, must know things of a lesser nature. Besides, if he knows himself, he knows what he can do, will do, or has done; which is as much as to say that he knows all things. And that God knows himself, must be granted; for if it be the privilege of an intelligent creature to know himself, though his knowledge be but imperfect, surely God must know himself. And because his knowledge cannot have any defect—for that would be inconsistent with infinite perfection—he must have a perfect, that is to say, an infinite knowledge of himself, and consequently of all other things.

The knowledge of God, as having the creature for its object, is distinguished, in scripture, into his comprehending all things, or seeing them or having a perfect intuition of them, and his approving of things; or it is either intuitive or approbative. The former of these is what we principally understand by the attribute of omniscience. This is referred to when it is said, 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world';<sup>b</sup> and 'Thou knowest my down-sitting and up-rising, and art acquainted with all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether';<sup>c</sup> and 'The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.'<sup>d</sup> As for the approbative knowledge of God, it is less properly called knowledge; because it is seated rather in the will than in the understanding. Of this we read in several scriptures. Thus God tells Moses, 'I know thee by name,'<sup>e</sup>—a saying which is explained by the following words, 'And thou hast found grace in my sight.' So when our Saviour says, concerning his enemies, 'I will profess unto you, I never knew you,'<sup>f</sup> he speaks of a knowledge, not of intuition, but of approbation. In the former sense, he knows all things,—bad as well as good,—that which he hates and

<sup>z</sup> Isa. li. 12.

<sup>a</sup> Psal. cxlvii. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Acts xv. 18.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. cxxxix. 2, 3, 4.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Matth. vii. 23.



will punish, as well as what he delights in ; in the latter, he knows only that which is good, or is agreeable to his will.

God is said to know what he can do, and what he has done, or will do. He knows what he can do, even many things that he will not do ; for as his power is unlimited, so that he can do infinitely more than he will, so he knows more than he will do. This is very obvious. We ourselves, as free agents, can do more than we will ; and, as intelligent, we know in many instances what things we can do, though we will never do them. Much more must this be said of the great God ; who ‘ calleth things that be not as though they were.’<sup>g</sup> Accordingly, when David inquires of God, ‘ Will Saul come down ? and will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand ? ’ God answers him, ‘ He will come down, and the men of Keilah will deliver thee up ; ’<sup>h</sup> which implies, that God knew what they would have done, had not his providence prevented it. Thus things known by him are said to be possible, by reason of his power ; while the future existence of them depends on his will. [See Note 2 D, page 125.]—Again, God knows whatever he has done, does, or will do, namely, things past, present, or to come. That he knows all things present, has been proved, from the dependence of things on his providence, and from his knowledge being inseparably connected with his power. That he knows all things past, is no less evident : for they were once present, and consequently known by him ; and to suppose that he does not know them, is to charge him with forgetfulness, or to suppose that his knowledge at present is less perfect than it was,—which is inconsistent with infinite perfection. Moreover, if God did not know all things past, he could not be the Judge of the world ; and particularly, he could neither reward nor punish,—both which acts respect only things that are past. Such things, therefore, are perfectly known by him. When Job considered his present afflictions as the punishment of past sins, he said, ‘ My transgression is sealed up in a bag ; thou sewest up mine iniquity,’—a metaphorical way of speaking, which implied that God remembered it. So when God threatens to punish his adversaries for their iniquity, he speaks of it as remembered by him, ‘ laid up in store ’ with him, and ‘ sealed up among his treasures ; ’<sup>k</sup> and when, on the other hand, he designed to reward or encourage the religious duties performed by his people, who feared his name, it is said, ‘ a book of remembrance was written before him, for them.’<sup>l</sup>

But what we shall principally consider, is God’s knowing all things future, namely, not only such as are the effects of necessary causes, where the effect is known in or by the cause, but such as are contingent with respect to us. This is the most difficult of all knowledge, and possesses properties which argue it to be truly divine. By future contingencies, we understand things which are accidental, or which, as we commonly say, happen by chance, without any forethought or design of men. Now that many things happen so with respect to us, and therefore cannot be certainly foreknown by us, is very obvious. But even these are foreknown by God. For things that happen without our design, or forethought, and therefore are not certainly foreknown by us, are the objects of his providence, and therefore known to him from the beginning. Thus the fall of a sparrow to the ground is a casual thing ; yet our Saviour says, that this is not without his providence.<sup>m</sup> Hence, that which is casual or accidental to us, is not so to him ; so that though we cannot have a certain or determinate foreknowledge of it, it does not follow that he has not. He has, accordingly, foretold many such future events ; as appears by the following instances. Ahab’s death by an arrow, shot at random, may be reckoned a contingent event ; yet this was foretold before he went into the battle,<sup>n</sup> and accomplished accordingly. That Israel should be afflicted and oppressed in Egypt, and afterwards should be delivered, was foretold four hundred years before it came to pass.<sup>o</sup> And when Moses was sent to deliver them out of the Egyptian bondage, God tells them beforehand, how obstinate Pharaoh would be, and with how much difficulty he would be brought to let them go.<sup>p</sup> Joseph’s advancement in Egypt was a contingent and very unlikely

<sup>g</sup> Rom. iv. 17.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Sam. xxiii. 12.

<sup>i</sup> Job xiv. 17.

<sup>k</sup> Deut. xxxii. 34, 35.

<sup>l</sup> Mal. iii. 16.

<sup>m</sup> Matt. x. 29.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 17, 18, 34.

<sup>o</sup> Gen. xv. 13, 14.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. iii. 19, 20.

event; yet it was made known several years before, by his prophetic dream.<sup>a</sup> That also which tended more immediately to it, was his afterwards foretelling what happened to the chief butler and baker, and the seven years of plenty and famine in Egypt, signified by Pharaoh's dream, all which were contingent events, and were foretold by divine inspiration, and therefore foreknown by God. Again, Hazaël's coming to the crown of Syria, and the cruelty that he would exercise, were foretold to him, when he thought he could never be such a monster of a man as he afterwards appeared to be.<sup>r</sup> Also, Judas' betraying our Lord, was foretold to him;<sup>s</sup> though at the time he seemed as little disposed to commit so vile a crime as any of the disciples.

Having thus considered God's knowledge, with respect to the object, either as past, or as future, we shall now observe some properties of it; whereby it appears to be superior to all finite knowledge, and truly divine.—1. It is perfect, intimate, and distinct, and not superficial, or confused, or general, as ours often is. It is said concerning him, that 'he bringeth out his hosts by number, and calleth them all by names;'<sup>t</sup> and this denotes his exquisite knowledge of all things, as well as his propriety in them, and his using them at his pleasure. And since all creatures 'live and move,' or act, 'in him,'<sup>u</sup> or by his powerful influence, it follows that his knowledge is as distinct and particular as the actions themselves. Even the most indifferent actions, which are hardly taken notice of by ourselves, such as 'our down-sitting and up-rising,'<sup>x</sup> and all transient thoughts, which are no sooner formed in our minds than forgotten by us, are known by him 'afar off,' at the greatest distance of time, when they are irrecoverably lost with respect to us. That God knows all things thus distinctly, is evident, not only from their dependence upon him, but also from their accordance with his divine purpose. Accordingly, when he had brought his work of creation to perfection, 'he saw every thing that he had made, and beheld it was very good;' that is, it was agreeable to his eternal design, or, if we may so express it, to the idea, or platform, laid in his own mind. And this he pronounced concerning every individual thing,—which is as much the object of his omniscience as the effect of his power. Now what can be more expressive of the perfection and distinctness of his knowledge than this? The apostle might well say, therefore, that 'there is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.'<sup>y</sup>—2. He knows every thing, even future contingencies, with a certain and infallible knowledge, without the least hesitation, or possibility of mistake. And as opinion or conjecture is opposed to certainty, it is not in the least attributable to him. In this, his knowledge differs from that of the best of creatures; who can only guess at some things that may happen, according to the probable fore-views they have of them.—3. He knows all things directly and not in a discursive way, agreeable to our common method of reasoning, by inferring one thing from another, or by comparing things together, and observing their connexion, dependence, and various powers and manner of acting, and thereby discerning what will follow. Such a knowledge as this is acquired, and presupposes a degree of ignorance. Conclusions can hardly be said to be known, till the premises whence they are deduced be duly weighed. But to do this is inconsistent with the perfect knowledge of God, who sees all things in himself, things possible in his own power, and things future in his will, without inferring, abstracting, or deducing conclusions from premises.—4. He knows all things at once, not successively as we do. For if successive duration is an imperfection—as was before observed, when we considered the eternity of God—his knowing all things after this manner, is equally so. Indeed, his knowing things successively would argue an increase of the divine knowledge, or a making advances in wisdom by experience, and by daily observation of things, which, though experienced by all intelligent creatures, can by no means be supposed of him whose 'understanding is infinite.'<sup>z</sup>

We shall now consider what improvement we ought to make of God's omniscience, in relation to our conduct in this world.

q Gen. xxxvii. 5, &c.  
u Acts xvii. 28.

r 2 Kings viii. 12, 13.  
x Psal. cxxxix. 2.

s John vi. 70, 71.  
y Heb. iv. 13.

t Isa. xl. 26.  
z Psal. cxlvii. 3.

1. Let us take heed that we do not practically deny this attribute, Let us not act as though we thought that we could hide ourselves from the all-seeing eye of God. Let us not say, to use the words of Eliphaz, 'How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.'<sup>a</sup> How vain a supposition is this! for 'there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.'<sup>b</sup> Hypocrisy is, as it were, an attempt to hide ourselves from God,—an acting as though we thought that we could deceive or impose on him, and is called, in scripture, 'a lying to him,'<sup>c</sup> or 'a compassing him about with lies and deceit.'<sup>d</sup> This all are chargeable with who rest in a form of godliness, as though God saw only the outward actions, but not the heart. Let us likewise not be more afraid of man than of God, or venture, without considering his all-seeing eye, to commit the vilest abominations, which we would be afraid and ashamed to do were we under the eye of man. 'It is a shame,' saith the apostle, 'even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.'<sup>e</sup> And God, speaking to the prophet Ezekiel, says, concerning an apostatizing people of old, 'Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.'<sup>f</sup>

2. The consideration of God's omniscience should be improved, to humble us under a sense of sin, but especially of secret sins, which are all known to him. Thus it is said, 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee; our secret sins in the light of thy countenance';<sup>g</sup> and, 'His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.'<sup>h</sup> There are many things which we know concerning ourselves, that no creature is privy to, which occasion self-conviction, and might fill us with shame and confusion of face. But our own knowledge of them falls infinitely short of God's omniscience; 'for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.'<sup>i</sup> This should make sinners tremble at the thoughts of a future judgment; for if sins be not pardoned, he is able to bring them to remembrance, and, as he threatens he will do, 'set them in order before their eyes.'<sup>k</sup>

3. The due consideration of God's omniscience will, on the other hand, tend very much to the comfort of believers. He seeth their secret wants, the breathings of their souls after him; and, as our Saviour saith, 'Their Father which seeth in secret shall reward them openly.'<sup>l</sup> With what pleasure may they appeal to God as the searcher of hearts, concerning their sincerity, when it is called in question by men! And when they are afraid of contracting guilt and defilement, by secret faults, which they earnestly desired, with the Psalmist, to be 'cleansed from,'<sup>m</sup> it is some relief to them to consider that God knows them, and therefore is able to give them repentance for them; so that they may pray with David, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'<sup>n</sup> To all, likewise, who are affected with a view of the church's troubles, and of the deep-laid designs of its enemies against it, it is a consoling thought that God knows these, and therefore can easily defeat them, and turn them into foolishness.

4. The due consideration of God's omniscience will be of great use to all Christians, to promote a right frame of spirit in holy duties. It will make them careful how they behave themselves, as being in his sight; and tend to fill them with a holy reverence, as those that are under his immediate inspection, that they may approve themselves to him, in whose presence they are.

### *The Wisdom of God.*

God is most wise, or is infinite in wisdom; or, as the apostle expresses it, 'he is the only wise God.'<sup>o</sup> This perfection, considered as absolute, underived, and truly divine, belongs only to him. Even the angels, the most excellent order of created

a Job xxii. 13, 14.

e Eph. v. 12.

i 1 John iii. 20.

n Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

b Chap. xxxiv. 22.

f Ezek. viii. 12.

k Psal. l. 21.

o Rom. xvi. 27.

c Psal. lxxviii. 36.

g Psal. xc. 8.

l Matt. vi. 4.

d Hos. xi. 12.

h Job xxxiv. 21.

m Psal. xix. 12.



beings, are said to be destitute of it, or to be 'charged with folly.'<sup>p</sup> For our understanding what this divine perfection is, let us consider that wisdom contains in it more than knowledge; for there may be a great degree of knowledge where there is but little wisdom, though there can be no wisdom without knowledge. Knowledge is, as it were, the eye of the soul, whereby it apprehends, or sees, things in a true light, and so is opposed to ignorance, or not knowing things; but wisdom is that whereby the soul is directed in the skilful management of things, or in ordering them for the best, and it is opposed, not so much to ignorance, or error of judgment, as to folly or error in conduct. It consists more especially in designing the best and most valuable end in what we are about to do,—in using the most proper means to effect it,—in observing the season most fit and the circumstances most expedient and conducive for accomplishing it,—and in foreseeing and guarding against every occurrence that may frustrate our design, or give us an occasion to blame ourselves for doing what we have done, or to repent of it, or to wish we had taken other measures. Now,

1. The wisdom of God appears in the reference or tendency of all things to his own glory. This is the highest and most excellent end that can be proposed; as he is the highest and best of beings, and his glory, to which all things are referred, is infinitely excellent. Here let us consider, that God is, by reason of his infinite perfection, naturally and necessarily the object of adoration,—that he cannot be adored, unless his glory be set forth and demonstrated, or made visible,—that there must be an intelligent creature to behold his glory, and adore his perfections, which are thus demonstrated and displayed,—and that every thing which he does is fitted and designed to lead this creature into the knowledge of his glory. Now that every thing is thus fitted and designed, is an eminent instance of divine wisdom, and is a fact so obvious that we need not travel far to know it. Whenever we look, we may behold how excellent God's name is in all the earth. And because some are so stupid that they cannot, or will not, in a way of reasoning, infer his divine perfections from things that are without us, he has instamped the knowledge of them on the souls and consciences of men; so that, at times, they are obliged, whether they will or not, to acknowledge them. There is something which 'may be known of God,' which is said to be 'manifest in, and shown to' all; so that 'the Gentiles, who have not the law,' that is, the written word of God, 'do by nature the things,' that is, some things 'contained therein,' and so are 'a law unto themselves,' and 'show the work of the law written in their hearts.'<sup>q</sup> [See Note 2 E, p. 125.] God has led us farther into the knowledge of his divine perfections by his word; which he is said to have 'magnified above all his name.'<sup>r</sup> And having thus adapted his works and word to set forth his glory, he discovers himself to be infinite in wisdom.

2. The wisdom of God appears in his doing whatever he does in the fittest season, and in circumstances all of which tend to set forth his own honour, and argue his foresight to be infinitely perfect; so that he can see no reason to wish that anything had been otherwise ordered, or to repent that it was done. 'For all his ways are judgment.'<sup>s</sup> 'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven;' and 'he hath made every thing beautiful in his time.'<sup>t</sup> But since wisdom is known by its effects, we shall, for farther illustrating the wisdom of God, observe some of the traces or footsteps of it in his works. We remark, therefore,

3. That the wisdom of God appears in the work of creation. As it requires infinite power to produce something out of nothing; so the wisdom of God appears in that excellent order, beauty, and harmony, which we observe in all the parts of the creation,—in the subserviency of one thing to another,—and in the tendency of all to promote the moral government of God in the world, and the good of man. In this manner was this lower world fitted up for man, that it might be a convenient habitation for him, and a glorious object, in which he might contemplate, and thereby be led to advance, the divine perfections, which shine forth therein as in

p Job iv. 18.  
s Deut. xxxii. 4.

q Rom. i. 19. chap. ii. 14, 15.  
t Eccles. iii. 1, 11.

r Psal. cxxxviii. 2.

a glass. We have therefore the highest reason to say, 'Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all.'<sup>u</sup> 'He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.'<sup>x</sup> But as this argument hath been insisted on, with great ingenuity and strength of reason by others,<sup>y</sup> we shall say no more upon it, but proceed to observe,

4. That the wisdom of God appears in the works of providence. It produces unexpected events for the good of mankind, and brings them about by means that seem to have no tendency to this end, but rather the contrary. This will appear in the following instances. Jacob's flying from his father's house, was wisely ordered, as a means not only of his escaping the fury of his brother, of the trial of his faith, and of humbling him for the sinful method he took to obtain the blessing; but also of building up his family, and of increasing his substance in the world, under a very unjust father-in-law and master, as Laban was. Joseph's being sold into Egypt, was ordered, as a means of his preserving not only that land, but his father's house, from perishing by famine. His imprisonment also was the occasion of his advancement. And both events led the way to the accomplishment of what God had foretold relating to his people's dwelling in Egypt, and their wonderful deliverance from the bondage they were to endure therein. The wisdom of God was seen, likewise, in the manner of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt,—in his first laying them under the greatest discouragements, by suffering the Egyptians to increase their tasks and burdens,—in his hardening Pharaoh's heart, that he might try his people's faith, and make their deliverance appear more remarkable,—in then plaguing the Egyptians, that he might punish their pride, injustice, and cruelty,—and finally, in giving them up to such an infatuation, as effectually secured their final overthrow, and his people's safety. His wisdom was seen further, in his leading Israel forty years in the wilderness, before he brought them into the promised land, that he might give them statutes and ordinances, and that they might experience various instances of his presence among them, by judgments and mercies, and so be prepared for all the privileges he designed for them, as his peculiar people, in the land of Canaan. We have, moreover, a very wonderful instance of the wisdom of Providence recorded in the book of Esther. When Haman, the enemy of the Jews, had obtained a decree for their destruction, and purposed, as a first step, to sacrifice Mordecai to his pride and revenge, providence turned upon himself whatever he intended against him. There was, in all the circumstances that led to this, something very remarkable, which brought about the church's deliverance and advancement, when to an eye of reason this seemed almost impossible.

5. The wisdom of God appears yet more eminently in the work of our redemption. This work is what 'the angels desire to look into,' and cannot behold without the greatest admiration; for herein God's 'manifold wisdom' is displayed.<sup>z</sup> It solves the difficulty involved in a former dispensation of providence, respecting God's suffering sin to enter into the world; which he could have prevented, and probably would have done, had he not designed to overrule the event, for bringing about the work of our redemption by Christ,—so that what we lost in our first head should be recovered, with great advantage, in our second, the Lord from heaven. But though this matter was determined, in the eternal covenant, between the Father and the Son, and the necessity of man seemed to require that Christ should become incarnate, as soon as man fell; yet it was deferred till many ages after. And in this delay the wisdom of God eminently appeared. By means of it, he tried the faith and patience of his church, and put them upon waiting for, and depending on, him who was to come. So that though they had not received the promised blessing of his coming, yet 'they saw it afar off,' and 'were persuaded of it, and embraced it,' and, with Abraham, 'rejoiced to see his day,' though at a great distance.<sup>a</sup> They thus glorified the faithfulness of God, and depended on his word, that the work of redemption should be brought about, as certainly as though it had been actually accomplished. Our Saviour, in the mean time, took occasion to display

<sup>u</sup> Psal. civ. 24.    <sup>x</sup> Jer. x. 12.    <sup>y</sup> See Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation*, and Derham's *Physico-Theology*.    <sup>z</sup> 1 Pet. i. 12. Eph. iii. 10.    <sup>a</sup> Heb. xi. 13. John viii. 56.



his own glory, as the Lord and Governor of his church, to whom he often appeared in a human form, assumed for that purpose as a prelude of his incarnation. They had hence the greatest reason to expect his coming in our nature. Moreover, the time of Christ's coming in the flesh was such as appeared most seasonable. The state of the church was very low, religion was almost lost among them, and the darkness they were under was exceeding great; so that it seemed very necessary that the Messiah should come. When iniquity almost universally prevailed among them, then 'the deliverer came out of Sion, and turned away ungodliness from Jacob';<sup>a</sup> and when the darkness of the night was greatest, it was the most proper time for 'the Sun of righteousness to arise, with healing in his wings.'<sup>b</sup>

6. The wisdom of God farther appears, in the various methods he has taken in the government of his church, before and since the coming of Christ. Till Moses' time, as has been before observed,<sup>c</sup> God left his church without a written word, that he might take occasion, in the exercise of infinite condescension, to converse with them more immediately, and to show them that, though they had no such method of knowing his revealed will as we have, yet he could communicate his mind to them another way. And when the necessity of affairs required it, his wisdom was seen, in taking this method of oral revelation, to propagate religion in the world.—Again, when he designed to govern his church by those rules which he hath laid down in scripture, he revealed the great doctrines contained therein, in a gradual way. The dispensation of his providence towards them, like the light of the morning, was increasing to a perfect day. He first instructed them by various types and shadows, leading them into the knowledge of the gospel, which was afterwards to be more clearly revealed. He taught them, as they were able to bear instruction, like children growing in knowledge, till they arrive to a perfect manhood. He first gave them manifold predictions as a ground to expect the blessings which he would bestow in after-ages; and he afterwards glorified his faithfulness in their accomplishment.—He sometimes, also, governed them in a more immediate way, and confirmed their faith, as was then necessary, by miracles, and raised up prophets, as occasion served, whom he furnished, in an extraordinary way, for the service to which he called them, to lead his church into the knowledge of those truths on which their faith was built.—To this we may add, that he gave them various other helps for their faith, by those common and ordinary means of grace, which they were favoured with, and which the gospel church now enjoys, and has ground to conclude will be continued until Christ's second coming.—Here we might take occasion to consider how the wisdom of God appears, in furnishing his church with a gospel ministry,—in adapting the management of it to the necessities of his people,—in employing those persons about it who are duly qualified for it,—in assisting them in the discharge of its duties, and in giving success to their humble endeavours; and all this in such a way, that the praise shall redound to himself, who builds his house, and bears the glory. But on this topic we may have occasion to insist, in a following part of this work,<sup>d</sup>

7. The wisdom of God appears, in the method he takes to preserve, propagate, and build up his church in the world. As his kingdom is not of this world, but is of a spiritual nature, he hath ordered that it shall not be promoted by those methods of violence, or of carnal policy, by which the secular interests of men are often advanced. He has no where appointed that wars should be proclaimed to propagate the faith, or that persons should be forced to embrace it against their will, or be enlisted under Christ's banner by bribery, or by a prospect of worldly advantage. Hence, all the success, worthy of the name, which the gospel has had, has been such as is agreeable to the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. His house is to be built, 'not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit.'<sup>e</sup>—Again, that the church should flourish under persecution,—that those methods which its enemies take to ruin it, should be overruled to its greater advantage,—that, in consequence, shame and disappointment should attend every weapon which is formed against Sion,—

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xi. 26.

<sup>b</sup> Mal. iv. 2. compared with Matt. iv. 16.

<sup>c</sup> See Quest. III. Sect.

\* How the Scripture is divided or distinguished.

<sup>d</sup> See Vol. II. Quest. clvi. and clvii.

<sup>e</sup> Zech. iv. 6.



and that the church should appear more eminently to be the care of God, when it meets with the most injurious treatment from men,—are plain proofs of the glory of divine wisdom. On the other hand, that its flourishing state as to outward things, should not be always attended with such marks or evidences of the divine favour as those which more immediately respect salvation, is equally an illustration of the divine wisdom; as God hereby incites his people to set the highest value on those things which are most excellent, and not to reckon themselves most happy in the enjoyment of the good things of this life, when they are destitute of his special presence with them.—Moreover, the preserving of the rising generation, especially the seed of believers, from the vile abominations which are in the world, and the calling of many of them by his grace, that there may be a constant reserve of them to be added to his church, and to preserve his interest in the world, as others, who have served their generation, are called out of it, are further proofs of the wisdom of God, as well as of his other perfections.

From what has been said concerning the wisdom of God, we may infer that none can be said to meditate aright on the works of God, such as creation, providence, or redemption, who do not behold and admire his manifold wisdom displayed in them, as well as his other perfections. As we conclude that man to be a very unskilful observer of a curious picture or statue, who takes notice only of its dimensions in general, or of the matter of which it is composed, without considering the symmetry and proportion of its parts, and those other excellencies of it by which the artist has signalized his skill; so it is below a Christian to be able to say only, that there are works of God done in the world, or to have a general idea of its being governed by providence, without having his thoughts suitably affected with the harmonious subserviency of things, and the design of all to set forth the glory of Him who is a God of infinite wisdom.

If we cannot understand the meaning of some particular dispensations of providence, so as to admire the wisdom of God in them, let us compare all the parts of providence together; and one will illustrate and add a beauty to another,—as our Saviour says to Peter, ‘What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’<sup>f</sup> Let us, in particular, compare the various dark dispensations, which the church of God is under at one time, with the glory that shall be put upon it at another.

From the displays of the wisdom of God in all his works, let us learn humility, under a sense of our own folly. The psalmist, when he had been meditating on the glory of some other parts of God’s creation, which he calls, ‘The work of his fingers,’<sup>g</sup> that is, creatures in which his wisdom is displayed in a very eminent degree, takes occasion to express his low thoughts of mankind in general, and says, ‘What is man, that thou art mindful of him?’ But, besides this, we may take occasion to have a humble sense of our own folly, that is, of our defect of wisdom; for it is but a little of God that is known by us, and the wonderful effects of divine wisdom are known but in part by us, who dwell in houses of clay.

Let us subject our understandings to God, and have a high veneration for his word, in which his wisdom is displayed, and which he has ordained as the means whereby we may be made wise unto salvation. And whatever incomprehensible mysteries we find contained in it, let us not reject or despise them, because we cannot comprehend them.

Finally, since God is infinite in wisdom, let us seek wisdom of him. ‘If any of you lack wisdom,’ says the apostle, ‘let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.’<sup>h</sup>

### *The Holiness of God.*

God is most holy, or infinite in holiness, which is essential to him. He is often styled, ‘The Holy One of Israel’;<sup>i</sup> and this attribute is thrice repeated by the seraphim, who, with the utmost reverence and adoration, ‘cry one unto another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.’<sup>k</sup> And he is said to be holy, exclusively of

<sup>f</sup> John xiii. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Psal. viii. 3, 4.

<sup>h</sup> James i. 5.

<sup>i</sup> Isa. i. 4.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. vi. 3.

all others ; as this is a divine perfection, and as he is infinitely and independently holy. ‘O Lord, thou only art holy ;’<sup>1</sup> and the reason of this is assigned, namely, that he is the only God. Holiness is his very nature and essence. ‘There is none holy as the Lord ; for there is none besides him.’<sup>m</sup>

In considering this divine perfection, we shall inquire, first, what we are to understand by it. Holiness is that whereby God is infinitely opposite to every thing that tends to reflect dishonour or reproach on his divine perfections. He is holy, especially, as he is infinitely opposite, in his nature, will, and works, to all moral impurity. As his power is opposed to all natural weakness, and his wisdom to the least defect of understanding ; so his holiness is opposed to all moral blemishes, or imperfections, which we call sin. Holiness, therefore, is not so much one perfection as the harmony of all his perfections, as they are opposed to sin. Hence it is called, ‘The beauty of the Lord.’<sup>n</sup> And when the psalmist prays, that the church may be made an holy people, and dealt with as such, he says, ‘Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.’<sup>o</sup> God’s holiness is that which, if we may so express it, adds a lustre to all his other perfections ; so that if he were not glorious in holiness, whatever else might be said of him, would tend rather to his dishonour than his glory, and the beauty of his perfections would be so sullied that they could not be called divine. As holiness is the brightest part of the image of God in man, without which nothing could be mentioned concerning him but what turns to his reproach, his wisdom would deserve no better a name than that of subtilty, his power would be injurious and destructive, and his zeal furious madness. Thus, if we separate holiness from the divine nature, all other excellences would be inglorious, because impure.

We shall next consider the holiness of God, as glorified or demonstrated in various instances.

1. The holiness of God appears in his works. This perfection was as eminently displayed in the work of creation, especially that of angels and men, as his power, wisdom, and goodness. He made them with a perfect rectitude of nature, with a power to retain it, and without the least spot or propensity to sin. There was no natural necessity laid on them to commit sin, which might infer God to be the author of it.—Furthermore, as a moral expedient to prevent it, as well as to assert his own sovereignty, he gave them a law, which was holy, as well as just and good, and warned them of those dreadful consequences which would ensue on its violation,—showing them that it would render them unholy, deprive them of his image, and consequently separate them from him, and render them the objects of his abhorrence.—We may add, that his end in making all other things was, that his intelligent creatures might actively glorify him, and be induced to holiness.

2. The holiness of God appears in the government of the world and of the church, in all the dispensations of his providence, either in a way of judgment or of mercy. He shows his displeasure against nothing but sin,—which is the only thing that renders creatures the objects of punishment ; and all the blessings he bestows are a motive to holiness. As to his people, whom he hath the greatest regard for, they are described, as ‘called to be saints ;’<sup>p</sup> and it is said of the church of Israel, that it was ‘holiness unto the Lord.’<sup>q</sup> All his ordinances also are holy, and are to be engaged in with such a frame of spirit as is agreeable to holiness. Accordingly he says, ‘I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me ;’<sup>r</sup> and ‘holiness becometh his house for ever.’<sup>s</sup> We are hence to estimate the success of the divine ordinances by their sanctifying effects,—when, through the divine blessing accompanying them, they tend to promote internal holiness in those who are engaged in them, so that they become distinguished from the rest of the world, and ‘sanctified through his truth.’<sup>t</sup>

It may be objected by some, that God’s suffering sin to enter into the world, which he might have prevented, was a reflection on his holiness. It must be allowed, indeed, that God might have prevented the entrance of sin into the world, by his immediate interposition, and so have kept man upright, as well as made him

1 Rev. xv. 4.  
q Jer. ii. 3.

m 1 Sam. ii. 2.  
r Lev. x. 3.

n Psal. xxvii. 4.  
s Psal. xciii. 5.

o Psal. xc. 17.  
t John xvii. 17.

p 1 Cor. i. 2.



so. Yet let it be considered, that he was not obliged to do this; and therefore might, without any reflection on his holiness, leave an innocent creature to the conduct of his own free will, so that this creature might be tempted, but not forced, to sin,—especially as he designed to overrule the event to the setting forth of the glory of all his perfections, and, in an eminent degree, of that of his holiness. This point, however, will be more particularly considered when we come to discuss some other questions.<sup>u</sup>

From what has been said, concerning the holiness of God, let us take occasion to behold and admire the beauty and glory of it, in all the divine dispensations. He can neither do, nor enjoin, any thing but what sets forth his infinite purity. And as he cannot be the author of sin, we must take heed that we do not advance any doctrines from which this consequence may be inferred. The holiness of God ought to be the standard by which they are to be tried,—as we shall take occasion to observe in several instances; and we ought to think ourselves as much concerned to advance the glory of this perfection, as that of any other. Yet it is one thing for persons to oppose what appears to be a truth, by alleging this popular objection, that it is contrary to the holiness of God; and another thing to support the charge. This will be particularly considered, when the objection, as brought against the doctrine of predestination, and several other doctrines, is answered in its proper place.

It is an excellency, beauty, and glory, in the Christian religion, which should make us more in love with it, that it leads to holiness, which was the image of God in man. All other religions have indulged, led to, or dispensed with many impurities; as for example, those of the Mahomedans and the Pagans. And the different religions professed by persons called Christians, are to be regarded as more or less valuable, and to be embraced or rejected, as they tend more or less to promote holiness. Here I cannot but observe, that it is a singular excellency of the Protestant religion above the Popish, that all its doctrines and precepts have a tendency to holiness, while the other admits of, dispenses with, and gives countenance to manifold impurities. This will appear, if we consider some of the doctrines held by Papists, which lead to licentiousness. Of this class, is their doctrine that some sins are, in their own nature, so small as not to deserve eternal punishment,—that satisfaction is to be made for them, by undergoing some penances enjoined them by the priest,—and that on this condition, he gives absolution to the offenders, and discharges them from any farther concern about their sins. This doctrine is certainly subversive of holiness, as well as contrary to scripture, which says, ‘The wages of sin is death.’<sup>x</sup> The word of God knows no distinction between mortal and venial sins, especially in the sense which the Papists entertain. Again, the doctrine of indulgences and dispensations to sin, given forth at a certain rate, is contrary to holiness. This doctrine, as displayed in practice, was a matter of great scandal to those who, among other reasons, took occasion from it, to separate from the church of Rome in the beginning of the Reformation; and, by their protesting against it, and expressing a just indignation against the vile practices to which it led, they gave glory to the holiness of God. The Papists, it is true, allege, in defence of the practice of indulgences, that it is maintained in compassion to those whose natural temper leads them, with impetuous violence, to those sins which are dispensed with; and that it is, in some respects, necessary, inasmuch as the temptations of some, arising from their condition in the world, are greater than others are liable to. But no such excuses will exempt a person from the guilt of sin,—much less warrant the practice of those who, by their indulgences, encourage them to commit it. Another doctrine maintained by the Papists is, that the law of God, as conformed to human laws, respects only outward actions or overt acts, as they are generally called, and not the heart, or the principle whence they proceed; and that, therefore, concupiscence, or the corruption of nature, which is the impure fountain whence all sins proceed, comes not under the cognizance of the divine law, nor exposes us to any degree of punishment. They entertain this view of concupiscence, either because they suppose it unavoidable,



or because every sin is an act, and not a habit,—the offspring or effect of ‘lust;’ and to obtain countenance to their sentiment, they pervert the words of the apostle, ‘And lust, when it has conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.’<sup>y</sup> Now, how much soever actual sins may be supposed to be scandalous and pernicious to the world in proportion as they are visible, the spring of defiled actions is, in reality, more corrupt and abominable, than the actions themselves. If the fruit be corrupt, the tree which brings it forth must be much more so. And though this is not so discernible by others, yet it is abhorred and punished by a jealous God, who searches the heart and the reins. This doctrine of the papists, therefore, is contrary to his holiness.—Another doctrine which reflects on the divine holiness, is that of the merit of good works, and our justification by them. This doctrine makes way for boasting, and is inconsistent with that humility which is the main ingredient in holiness. It also casts the highest reflection on Christ’s satisfaction, which is the greatest expedient for setting forth the holiness of God; and argues it not to have been absolutely necessary, and substitutes our imperfect works in its room.—We may instance, further, the doctrine of purgatory, and of prayers for the dead. This the papists are as tenacious of, as Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen were of the image of Diana at Ephesus. The destruction of it would endanger their craft;<sup>z</sup> and any disregard of it would bring no small detriment to them. But what renders it most abominable, is, that it extenuates the demerit of sin, and supposes it possible for the living to do that for the dead by their prayers which the latter neglected to do whilst they were alive. Persons, from this presumptuous supposition, do not see an absolute necessity of holiness to salvation. These, and many other doctrines which might have been mentioned, cast the highest reflection on the holiness of God, and not only evince the justice and necessity of the Reformation, but oblige us to maintain the contrary doctrines. If by way of reprisal, it be objected that there are many doctrines which we maintain, that lead to licentiousness, I hope we shall be able to exculpate ourselves; but this subject we reserve for its proper place, that we may avoid the repetition of things which we shall be obliged to insist on elsewhere.

As a further practical improvement of what we have taught respecting the holiness of God, let us not practically deny, or cast contempt on, this divine perfection. This we may be said to do, when we live without God in the world, as though we were under no obligation to holiness. The purity of the divine nature is proposed in scripture, not only as a motive, but so far as conformity to it is possible, as an exemplar of holiness. We are exhorted to be holy, not only because God is holy, but ‘as he is holy,’<sup>a</sup> or so far as the image of God in man consists in holiness. They who ‘live without God in the world, being alienated from his life,’ that is, his holiness, ‘and giving themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness,’ regard not the holiness of his nature or law. These sin presumptuously, and, accordingly, are said to ‘reproach the Lord,’<sup>b</sup> as though he were a God that had pleasure in wickedness; or if they conclude him to be infinitely offended with it, they regard not the consequence of being the objects of his displeasure and fiery indignation.—Again, men reflect on the holiness of God, when they complain of religion, as though this were too strict and severe a thing, a yoke that sits very uneasy upon them; and when they resolve to keep at the greatest distance from it, unless they may have some abatements made, or indulgence given, to live in the commission of some beloved lusts. These cannot bear a faithful reprover. Thus Ahab ‘hated Micaiah, because he did not prophesy good concerning him, but evil.’ Thus also the people in Isaiah’s days, did not like to hear of the holiness of God; and desired that the prophets would ‘cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them.’<sup>c</sup>—We may add, that they also do, in effect, deny or despise God’s holiness, who entertain an enmity or prejudice against holiness in persons whose conversation is not only blameless, but exemplary. Such make use of the word ‘saint,’ as a term of reproach; as though holiness were not only a worthless thing, but a blemish or disparagement to the nature of man,—a stain on his character,—a thing to be avoided by all who have any regard to their

y James i. 15.    z Acts xix. 25, 27.    a 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.    b Num. xv. 30.    c Isa. xxx. 11.

reputation; or, at least, as though religion were mere hypocrisy, particularly when it shines brightest in the conversation of those who esteem it their greatest ornament. What is this, but to spurn at the holiness of God, by endeavouring to bring that into contempt which is his image and delight?

### *The Justice of God.*

God is most just. This attribute differs but little from that of holiness. The two are sometimes distinguished thus: as holiness is the contrariety or opposition of his nature to sin, justice is an external and visible display of that opposition. In particular, when God is said to be just, he is considered as the Governor of the world. Hence, when he appears in the glory of his justice, he bears the character of a Judge; accordingly, it is said concerning him, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'<sup>d</sup> and he is said, 'without respect of persons to judge according to every man's work.'<sup>e</sup> The justice of God is sometimes taken for his faithfulness, which is a doing justice to his word. This view of it, however, will be more particularly considered, when we speak of him as abundant in truth. According to the most common and known sense of the word, it is taken either for his disposing, or for his distributive justice. The former is that whereby his holiness shines forth in all the dispensations of his providence; all his ways being equitable, of what kind soever they are. The latter, or his distributive justice, consists either in rewarding or punishing, and so is styled either remunerative or vindictive, [See note 2 F, page 126.] In these two respects, we shall more particularly consider this attribute.

As to the remunerative justice of God, he may be said to give rewards to his creatures, without our supposing the persons who are the subjects of them to have done anything by which they have merited them. We often find, in scripture, that the heavenly glory is set forth as a reward;<sup>f</sup> and it is called, 'a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give at that day,'<sup>g</sup> that is, when he appears, in the glory of his justice, to judge the world in righteousness. Scripture says also that it is 'a righteous thing with God to recompense to his people who are troubled, rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.'<sup>h</sup> As to the meaning of such expressions, I humbly conceive that they import the necessary and inseparable connection that subsists between grace wrought in us, and glory conferred upon us. Glory is called, indeed, a reward, or a crown of righteousness, to encourage us to duty; but it is so called, without supposing that what we do is in any degree meritorious. If ourselves are less than the least of all God's mercies, then the best actions performed by us must be so; for the action cannot have more honour ascribed to it than the agent. Or if, as our Saviour says, when 'we have done all, we must say we are unprofitable servants,'<sup>i</sup> and that sincerely, and not in a way of compliment, as some Popish writers, consistently with their doctrine of the merit of good works, understand it: we must conclude that glory is a reward not of debt, but of grace. The phrase, remunerative justice, therefore, is taken in an accommodated sense. The reward is not a blessing purchased by us, but for us. Christ is the purchaser, we are the receivers. It is strictly and properly the reward of his merit; but, in its application, it is the gift of his grace.

Next, there is the vindictive justice of God. By this he punishes sin, as an injury offered to his divine perfections, an affront to his sovereignty, a reflection on his holiness, and a violation of his law. For these he demands satisfaction, and inflicts punishment, proportioned to the nature of the crime; and this he continues to do, till satisfaction be given. This is called his 'visiting iniquity,'<sup>k</sup> or 'visiting for it';<sup>l</sup> it is also called, his 'setting his face against' a person, and 'cutting him off from amongst his people.'<sup>m</sup> When he does this, his wrath is compared to flames of fire,—it is called, 'the fire of his jealousy';<sup>n</sup> and they who are the objects of it are said to 'fall into the hands of the living God,' who is 'a consuming fire.'<sup>o</sup>

d Gen. xviii. 25.

h 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

u Zeph. i. 18.

e 1 Pet. i. 17.

i Luke xvi. 10.

o Heb. x. 31. compared with chap. xii. 29.

f Matt. x. 41, 42, and 1 Cor. iii. 14.

k Deut. v. 9.

l Jer. v. 9.

g 2 Tim. iv. 8.

m Lev. xvii. 10.

But that we may farther consider how God glorifies his justice, and thereby shows his infinite hatred of sin, we may observe that an eminent display of it was made in his inflicting that punishment which was due to our sins, on the person of Christ our Surety. It was, indeed, the highest act of condescending grace that Christ was willing to be charged with the iniquity of his people, or to have it laid upon him; but it was the greatest display of vindictive justice, that he was accordingly punished for it. He is said to have been 'made sin for us, who knew no sin;'<sup>q</sup> and God gave a commission to 'the sword' of his justice, to 'awake' and exert itself in an uncommon manner, against him, 'the man his fellow.'<sup>r</sup> In this instance, satisfaction was not only demanded, but fully given; and in that respect it differed from all the other displays of vindictive justice. On this subject, however, more will be said under some following answers.<sup>s</sup>

Again, the vindictive justice of God is displayed in punishing sin in the persons of finally impenitent sinners in hell. There a demand of satisfaction is perpetually made, but can never be given. For this reason the punishment inflicted is eternal; and it is accordingly called, 'everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.'<sup>t</sup> This subject also we shall have occasion to insist on more largely, under a following answer.<sup>u</sup>

In the two instances we have specified, punishment is taken in a strict and proper sense. There is, however, another sense, in which, though many evils called punishments are inflicted for sins committed, the word is taken in a less proper sense. In this sense, believers, who are justified on account of the satisfaction which Christ has given for their sins, are said to be punished for them. Thus it is said, 'Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve;'<sup>x</sup> and 'If his children forsake my law, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him.'<sup>y</sup> And the prophet, though speaking of some for whom God would execute judgment, and to whom he would be favourable in the end, so that they should behold his righteousness, yet represents them as 'bearing the indignation of the Lord, because they had sinned against him.'<sup>z</sup> As these evils are exceedingly afflictive, being often attended with a sad apprehension and fear of the wrath of God, and as sin is the cause of them, they are called punishments. Yet they differ from punishment in its most proper sense; for though justice inflicts evils on believers for sin, it doth not in doing so demand satisfaction: inasmuch as they are considered as justified, that is supposed to have been given; and, to speak with reverence, it is not agreeable to the nature of justice to demand satisfaction twice. Nevertheless, it is one thing for God really to demand it, and another thing for believers to apprehend or conclude that such a demand is made. This they may often do, as questioning whether they are believers, or in a justified state. God's design, however, in these afflictive dispensations, whatever he determines shall be the consequence of them, is to humble his people greatly, and to show them the demerit of sin. Moreover, the persons who are the subjects of these punishments, are considered not as enemies, but as children, and therefore as the objects of his love, at the same time that his hand is heavy upon them. For this reason some have called them castigatory punishments, agreeably to what the apostle saith, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;' and 'He dealeth with them as with sons.'<sup>a</sup>

From what has been said, concerning the justice of God in rewarding or punishing, we may learn that, since the heavenly blessedness is called a reward, to denote its connection with grace and duty, no person may presumptuously expect the one without the other. The crown is not to be put upon the head of any one, but him that runs the Christian race; and it is a certain truth, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'<sup>b</sup> On the other hand, as this is a reward of grace, founded on Christ's purchase, let us take heed that we do not ascribe that to our performances which is founded wholly on Christ's merit. Let every thing, in the idea of a re-

q 2 Cor. v. 21. r Zech. xiii. 7.

u Quest. xxix. and lxxxix.

z Micah vii. 9.

s Quest. xliv. and lxxi.

x Ezra ix. 13.

a Heb. xii. 6, 7.

t 2 Thess. i. 9.

y Psal. lxxxix. 30—33.

b Chap. xii. 14.



ward, that may be reckoned a spur to diligence, be apprehended and improved by us, to quicken and excite us to duty; but whatever there is in it of praise and glory, let it be ascribed to Christ. When we consider the heavenly blessedness in this view, let us say, as the angels and the blessed company who are joined with them are represented as saying, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'<sup>c</sup> It is the price that he paid which gives it the character of a reward; and therefore the glory of it is to be ascribed to him.

From what has been said concerning the vindictive justice of God in inflicting punishment on his enemies, let us learn the evil and heinous nature of sin, and take warning, that we may not expose ourselves to the same or like judgments. How deplorable is the condition of those who have contracted a debt which they can never pay,—who are said 'to drink of the wrath of the Almighty, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation!'<sup>d</sup> This consideration should induce us to flee from the wrath to come, and to make a right improvement of the price of redemption, which was given by Christ, to deliver his people from wrath.

Believers, who are delivered from the vindictive justice of God, have the highest reason for thankfulness; and under all the afflictive evils which they endure, it is a very great encouragement to them, that the most bitter ingredients are extracted. Their afflictions, it is true, are not in themselves 'joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.'<sup>e</sup> And let us not presume without ground, but give diligence to have good reason for concluding, that these are the dispensations of a reconciled Father, who 'corrects with judgment, not in anger, lest he should bring us to nothing.'<sup>f</sup> It will afford great matter of comfort, if we can say, that he is, at the same time, 'a just God and a Saviour,'<sup>g</sup> and that, as one observes, though he punishes *for* sin, yet it is not with the punishment *of* sin.

### *The Benignity of God.*

God is most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness. These perfections are mentioned together in Exod. xxxiv. 7. We shall consider first his goodness, which, in some respects, includes the others; though in other passages, it is distinguished from them, as will be afterwards more particularly observed. This being one of his communicable perfections, we may conceive of it by comparing it with that goodness which is in the creature; for by separating all the imperfections of it as it exists in the creature we may arrive at some idea of it.

Persons are denominated good, as having all those perfections that belong to their nature. This is the most extensive sense of goodness. It is taken also in a moral sense, and so consists in the rectitude of their nature. In this sense, we call a holy man a good man. Lastly, it is affirmed of one who is beneficent, or communicatively good, and so is the same with benignity. Now, as seen in this light, the goodness of God includes in it either all his perfections, or his holiness in particular, or his being disposed to impart or communicate those blessings to his creatures which they stand in need of; and thus are we to understand it, as distinguished from his other perfections. This goodness of God supposes that he has, in himself, an infinite and inexhaustible treasure of all blessedness, enough to fill all things, and to make his creatures completely happy. This he had from all eternity, before there was any object in which it might be displayed, or any act of power put forth to produce one. It is this the psalmist intends, when he says,<sup>h</sup> 'Thou art good;' and when he adds, 'Thou doest good,' as the former implies his being good in himself, the latter denotes his being so to his creatures.

Before we treat of this perfection in particular, we shall observe the difference that there is between goodness, mercy, grace, and patience, which, though they all are included in the divine benignity, and imply in them the communication of some

<sup>c</sup> Rev. v. 12.  
<sup>f</sup> Jer. x. 24.

<sup>d</sup> Job xxi. 20. compared with Rev. xiv. 10.  
<sup>g</sup> Isa. xlv. 21.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. xii. 11.  
<sup>h</sup> Psal. cxix. 68.

favours which tend to the creature's advantage, as well as to the glory of God, may be distinguished with respect to their objects. Goodness considers its object as indigent and destitute of all things; and so communicates those blessings that it stands in need of. Mercy considers its object as miserable; and though an innocent creature may be the object of the divine bounty and goodness, it is only a fallen, miserable, and undone creature, that is an object of compassion. Grace is mercy displayed freely; and its object is considered as not only miserable but unworthy. At the same time, though the sinner's misery and his unworthiness of pity, may be distinguished, the two ideas cannot be separated; for that which renders him miserable, constitutes him at the same time guilty, misery being inseparably connected with guilt, and no creature being miserable but as a sinner. We are considered, therefore, as unworthy of mercy, and in consequence objects of divine grace,—which is mercy extended freely to those who have rendered themselves unworthy of it. Patience and long-suffering, is the suspending of deserved fury, or the continuing to bestow undeserved favours,—a lengthening out of our tranquillity. These attributes are now to be considered in particular. And, first,

### *The Goodness of God.*

As God was infinite in power from all eternity, before there was any display or act of omnipotence; so he was eternally good, before there was any communication of his bounty, or any creature to which it might be imparted. The first display of this perfection was in giving being to all things; which were the objects of his bounty and goodness, as well as the effects of his power. And all the excellencies or advantages, which one creature hath above another, are as so many streams flowing from this fountain. 'He giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things.'<sup>i</sup>

### *The Mercy of God.*

The mercy of God considers its object as miserable, and is illustrated by all those distressing circumstances which render sinners the objects of compassion. Are all by nature bond-slaves, to sin and Satan? It is mercy that sets them free, 'delivers them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.'<sup>k</sup> Are we all by nature dead in sin, unable to do what is spiritually good, alienated from the life of God? Was our condition miserable, as being without God in the world, and without hope,—like the poor infant, mentioned by the prophet, 'cast out in the open field, to the loathing of our persons, whom no eye pitied?' It was mercy that 'said to us, Live.'<sup>l</sup> Accordingly, God is said to have 'remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.'<sup>m</sup>

The mercy of God is either common or special. Common mercy gives all the outward conveniences of this life; which are bestowed without distinction. 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'<sup>n</sup> 'His tender mercies are over all his works.'<sup>o</sup> But his special mercy is that which he bestows on, or has reserved for, the heirs of salvation, and which he communicates to them in a covenant way, in and through a Mediator. Accordingly, the apostle speaks of God, as 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.'<sup>p</sup>

### *The Grace of God.*

As God is said to be merciful, or to extend compassion to the miserable; so he doth this freely, and accordingly is said to be gracious. And as grace is free, so it is sovereign, and is bestowed in a discriminating way. That is given to one, which he denies to another; and only because it is his pleasure. Accordingly, one of Christ's disciples says, 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'<sup>q</sup> And our Saviour himself glorifies God for the display

<sup>i</sup> Acts xvii. 25.  
<sup>n</sup> Matt. v. 45.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. ii. 15.  
<sup>o</sup> Psal. cxlv. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6.  
<sup>p</sup> 2 Cor. i. 3.

<sup>m</sup> Psal. cxxxvi. 23.  
<sup>q</sup> John xiv. 22.

of his grace, in such a manner, when he says, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;' and he considers this as the result of his sovereign will, when he adds, 'even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' The discriminating grace of God appears in several instances.

1. It appears in his extending salvation to men, rather than to fallen angels. Our Saviour 'took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham,' because he designed to save the one, and to reserve the other 'in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.'<sup>s</sup> And among men, all of whom were equally unworthy of this invaluable blessing, only some are made partakers of it, and their number is comparatively very small. They are called 'a little flock;' and 'the gate' through which they enter 'is strait;' and 'the way is narrow that leads to life, and few there be that find it.'<sup>t</sup> There are many who make a considerable figure in the world for riches, honours, great natural abilities, bestowed by common providence, who are destitute of special grace; while others, who are poor and despised in the world, are called and saved. The apostle observed it to be so in his day, when he said, 'Not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.'<sup>u</sup>

2. The discriminating grace of God appears in several things relating to the internal means whereby he fits and disposes men for salvation. Thus the work of conversion is an eminent instance of discriminating grace; for herein he breaks through, and overcomes, that reluctance and opposition, which corrupt nature makes against it,—subdues the enmity and rebellion that were in the heart of man,—and works a powerful change in the will, whereby he subjects it to himself, contrary to its natural bias and inclination. That which renders this grace more illustrious, is, that many of those who are thus converted, were previously notorious sinners. Some were 'blasphemers, persecutors, and injurious.' The apostle says this concerning himself before his conversion, and concludes himself to have been 'the chief of sinners;' and he tells us, how he 'shut up many of the saints in prison,' and how, when they were put to death, 'he gave his voice against them, and punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and, being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them even unto strange cities.'<sup>x</sup> But you will say, "He was, in other respects, a moral man." He, therefore, gives an instance elsewhere of some who were far from being so, whom he puts in mind of having been 'fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners.' 'Such,' says he, 'were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.' Moreover, the change wrought in the soul is unasked for; and hence it may truly be said, 'God is found of them that sought him not.' The change is also undesired; for though unregenerate sinners desire to be delivered from misery, they are far from desiring to be delivered from sin, or to have repentance, faith, and holiness. If they pray for these blessings, their desires are conceived in such a manner, that the Spirit of God hardly calls them prayer. The Spirit of grace and of supplications, by which alone we are enabled to pray in a right manner, is what accompanies or flows from conversion. If, therefore, God bestows this blessing on persons so unworthy of it, and so averse to it, it must certainly be an instance of sovereign and discriminating grace.

3. The discriminating grace of God appears, farther, if we consider how much they who are the objects of it, differ from what they were, or if we compare their present with their former state. Once they were blind and ignorant of the ways of God, and going astray in crooked paths. The apostle speaks of this in the abstract: 'Ye were sometimes darkness;' and 'The god of this world had blinded the minds of some, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xi. 25, 26.  
with Matt. vii. 13, 14.  
Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

<sup>s</sup> Heb. ii. 16. compared with Jude 6.  
<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28.  
<sup>y</sup> Eph. v. 8.

<sup>t</sup> Luke xii. 32. compared  
<sup>x</sup> 1 Tim. i. 13, 15. compared with



unto them ;<sup>a</sup> but now they are made 'light in the Lord,' and brought into the way of truth and peace. Their hearts were once impenitent, unrelenting, and inclined to sin, without remorse or self-reflection. Nothing could make an impression on them ; for they were 'past feeling, and gave themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.'<sup>b</sup> But now they are penitent, humble, relenting, and broken under a sense of sin, afraid of every thing that may be an occasion of it, willing to be reprov'd for it, and desirous to be set at a greater distance from it. Once they were destitute of hope, or solid peace of conscience ; but now they have hope and joy in believing, and are delivered from that bondage in which they were formerly enthralled. A happy turn is thus given to the frame of their spirits. And as to the external and relative change which is made in their state, there is no condemnation to them as justified persons. Hence, they who were formerly in the utmost distress, expecting nothing but hell and destruction, are enabled to lift up their heads with joy, experiencing the blessed fruits and effects of this grace in their souls.

The discriminating grace of God farther appears, in his bestowing saving blessings on his people, at seasons when they appear most suitable and adapted to their condition. He is a very present help in a time of trouble ; and when their straits and difficulties are greatest, then is his time to send relief. When sinners sometimes have wearied themselves in the greatness of their way, while seeking rest and happiness in other things than the divine favour, and finding only disappointment, and when they are brought to the utmost extremity, then he appears in their behalf. So with respect to believers, when their comforts are at the lowest ebb, their hope almost degenerated into despair, their temptations most prevalent and afflicting, and they ready to sink under the weight that lies on their spirits,—when, as the psalmist says, their 'hearts are overwhelmed within them,' then 'he leads them to the rock that is higher than they.'<sup>c</sup> When they are even 'desolate and afflicted, and the troubles of their hearts are enlarged, then he brings them out of their distresses.'<sup>d</sup>

Thus the grace of God eminently appears, in what he bestows on his people. But if we look forward, and consider what he has prepared for them, or the hope that is laid up in heaven, then we may behold the most amazing displays of grace, in which they who shall be the happy objects of it, will be a wonder to themselves, and will see more of the glory of it than can now be expressed in words. Hence the psalmist says, in a way of admiration, 'O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men !'<sup>e</sup>

It may, perhaps, be objected, that the afflictions which God's people are exposed to in this life, are inconsistent with the glory of his grace and mercy. But afflictive providences, so far from being inconsistent with the glory of these perfections, tend peculiarly to illustrate them. Afflictions are needful as an expedient to humble us for sin, and to prevent it for the future ; and however grievous they are, yet as they are overruled by God, as the apostle says, to 'yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby,'<sup>f</sup> they are far from being inconsistent with the mercy and grace of God. This will farther appear, if we consider that the outward afflictions are often attended with inward supports and spiritual comforts. Accordingly, the apostle says concerning himself, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ ;'<sup>g</sup> and 'though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'<sup>h</sup> Nothing but this could make him say, 'I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong.'<sup>i</sup>

It is farther objected, that the doctrine of free grace leads men to licentiousness, and therefore that what we have said concerning it, is either not true and warrantable, or at least, should not be much insisted on, lest licentiousness should ensue. Now those sinners only abuse the grace of God who presumptuously take occasion

a 2 Cor. iv. 4.

b Eph. iv. 19.

c Psal. lxi. 2.

d Psal. xxv. 16, 17.

e Psal. xxxi. 19.

f Heb. xii. 11.

g 2 Cor. i. 5.

h Chap. iv. 16.

i Chap. xii. 10.

from it to go on, as they apprehend, securely in sin,—alleging that God is merciful and gracious, and ready to forgive. The vile and disingenuous temper of such persons the apostle observed in some that lived in his days ; and he expresses the greatest abhorrence of it : ‘ Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid.’<sup>k</sup> But does it follow, that because the doctrine of grace is abused by some, as an occasion of licentiousness, through the corruption of their nature, it therefore leads to it ? The greatest blessings may be the occasion of the greatest evils ; but yet they do not lead to them. That which leads to licentiousness must present some motive or inducement which will warrant an ingenuous mind, acting according to the rules of equity and justice, to take occasion to sin ; but this nothing can do, much less the grace of God. His great clemency, indeed, may sometimes give occasion to those who hate him, and have ingratitude and rebellion rooted in their natures, to take up arms against him ; and an act of grace may be abused, so as to make the worst of criminals more bold in their wickedness, who presume that they may commit it with impunity. But this is not the natural tendency or genuine effect of grace ; nor will it be thus abused by any, but those who are abandoned to every thing that is vile and ungrateful. As the law of God prohibits all sin, and his holiness is opposed to it ; so his grace affords the strongest motive to holiness. It is therefore the neglect or contempt of this grace, and a corrupt disposition to act contrary to the design of it, which leads to licentiousness. Grace and duty are inseparably connected ; so that where God bestows the one, he expects the other. Yea, duty, which is our act, is God’s gift, as the power to perform it is from him. Thus, when he promises to give his people ‘ a new heart,’ and to ‘ put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his statutes,’ he tells them, that they should ‘ remember their evil ways and doings, and loath themselves in their own sight for their iniquities.’ This is not only a prediction respecting the event, but a promise of what he would incline them to do ; and when he adds, that ‘ for this he would be inquired of by them,’<sup>l</sup> or that they should seek the blessings by fervent prayer, he secures to them by promise a disposition and grace to perform this great duty, which is inseparably connected with expected blessings. God himself, therefore, will take care that, however others abuse his grace, it shall not lead those who are, in a distinguishing way, the objects of it, to licentiousness. We may add that it is a disparagement to this divine perfection to say, that because some take occasion from it to continue in sin, its glory is therefore to be, as it were, concealed, and not published to the world. As some of old did not care to hear of the holiness of God, and required the prophets, if they would render their doctrine acceptable to them, not to insist on that perfection, but to ‘ cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them ;’<sup>m</sup> so there are many who are as little desirous to hear of the free and discriminating grace of God, which contains the very sum and substance of the gospel, lest it should be abused. The glory of it, on the contrary, cannot be enough admired ; and it ought, therefore, to be often recommended, as what leads to holiness, and lies at the very root of all religion.

That the grace of God may be so improved, let it be farther considered, that it is the greatest inducement to humility, as well as one of the greatest ornaments and evidences of a true Christian. This appears from the nature of the thing ; for, as has been but now observed, grace supposes its object unworthy. It argues him a debtor to God for all that he enjoys or expects ; and this consideration, if duly weighed, will make him appear vile and worthless in his own eyes, and excite in him a degree of thankfulness in proportion to the ground he has to claim an interest in it, and the extensiveness of its blessed fruits and effects.

### *The Patience of God.*

We proceed to speak of God as long-suffering, or, as he is styled by the apostle, ‘ the God of patience.’<sup>n</sup> Sometimes this attribute is set forth in a metaphorical way, and called a ‘ restraining of his wrath,’<sup>o</sup> and ‘ refraining himself,’ and ‘ hold-

<sup>k</sup> Rom. vi. 1, 2.

<sup>l</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31, 37.

<sup>m</sup> Isa. xxx. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. xv. 5.

<sup>o</sup> Psal. lxxvi. 10.

ing his peace,' or 'keeping silence.'<sup>p</sup> While he exercises patience, he is represented, speaking after the manner of men, as one that is 'weary' with forbearing;<sup>q</sup> and he is said to be 'pressed,' under a provoking people, 'as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.'<sup>r</sup> By all these expressions, the patience of God is set forth in a familiar style, according to our common way of speaking. But that we may briefly explain the nature of it, let us consider, in general, that it is a branch of his goodness and mercy, manifested in suspending the exercise of his vindictive justice, and in his not punishing in such a degree as sin deserves. But that we may consider this more particularly, we shall observe something concerning the objects of it, and the various instances in which it is displayed; how it is glorified; how the glory of it is consistent with that of vindictive justice; and lastly, how it is to be improved by us.

1. As to the objects of God's patience, since it consists in deferring deserved wrath, an innocent creature cannot be the object of it. Vindictive justice makes no demand upon him; nor has it any reserves of punishment laid up in store for him. Such a one, indeed, is the object of goodness, but not of forbearance; for punishment cannot be said to be deferred where it is not due. On the other hand, they cannot be said to be the objects of patience, in whom the vindictive justice of God is displayed to the utmost, when all the vials of his wrath are poured forth. Whether the devils are, in some sense, the objects of God's forbearance, as having ground to expect a greater degree of punishment after the final judgment, is disputed by some, who contend about the sense of the word 'forbearance.' They are said, indeed, to be 'reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;'<sup>s</sup> that is, though their state be hopeless, and their misery great beyond expression, yet there is a greater degree of punishment, which they bring upon themselves, by all the hostilities they commit against God in this world. This farther appears, from what they are represented as having said to our Saviour, 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?'<sup>t</sup> a saying from which it is sufficiently evident that their misery shall be greater than now it is. Yet the less degree of punishment inflicted on them is never called, in scripture, an instance of God's patience or long-suffering towards them. We must conclude, therefore, that they are not, properly speaking, the objects of the glory of this attribute. Patience, then, is extended only to sinful men, while in this world. Accordingly it is called, in scripture, 'the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering,'<sup>u</sup> and is said to 'lead' those who are the objects of it 'to repentance.' Hence there must, together with the exercise of this perfection, be a day or season of grace granted, which is called, in scripture, with a peculiar emphasis, the sinner's day, or 'the time of his visitation;' in which it ought to be his highest concern 'to know the things which belong unto his peace.'<sup>x</sup> And the gospel that is preached, in this season of God's forbearance, is called, 'the word of his patience;'<sup>y</sup> so that there is something more in this attribute than merely a deferring of punishment. Accordingly, God is said, to 'wait that he may be gracious;'<sup>z</sup> and the effects and consequences of his waiting are various,—as may be said of all the means of grace. Sinners, who neglect to improve it, have in consequence of it not only a reprieve from deserved punishment, but also all those advantages of common grace which attend it. But with respect to believers, it may be said, in the words of the apostle, 'The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.'<sup>a</sup> God spares them, therefore, not that he may take a more fit opportunity to punish them, but that he may wait the set time to favour them, and then extend to them salvation. In this respect more especially, the exercise of this perfection is founded in the death of Christ. And as the elect, who were purchased thereby, were, by the divine appointment, to live throughout all the ages of time, and to have the saving effects of his redemption applied to them, one after another, it was necessary that the patience of God should be so long continued. This perfection, therefore, is glorified more immediately with respect to them, as the result of the plan of redemption; and, in subserviency to this, it is extended to all the world.

p Isa. xlii. 14. and Psal. l. 21.

q Isa. i. 14. chap. vii. 13. Mal. ii. 17.

r Amos ii. 13.

s Jude 6.

t Matt. viii. 29.

u Rom. ii. 4.

x Luke xix. 42, 44.

y Rev. iii. 10.

z Isa. xxx. 18.

a 2 Pet. iii. 15.



2. The patience of God has been displayed in various instances. It was owing to it that God did not destroy our first parents as soon as they fell. He might then, without the least impeachment of his justice, have banished them for ever from his presence, and left their whole posterity destitute of the means of grace, and have punished them all in proportion to the guilt contracted. That the world is continued to this day, is therefore a very great instance of God's long-suffering. Again, when mankind were universally degenerate, and 'all flesh had corrupted their way,' before the flood, and God determined to destroy them, yet he would not do this, till in the display of his patience he had given an intimation of this desolating judgment, an hundred and twenty years before it came.<sup>b</sup> And Noah was, during this period, 'a preacher of righteousness;' while 'the long-suffering of God' is said to have 'waited' on them.<sup>c</sup> Further, the Gentiles, who not only worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, but committed vile abominations, contrary to the dictates of nature, and thereby filled up the measure of their iniquity, are said to be the objects of God's patience,—though in a lower sense than that in which believers are said to be so. Accordingly, the apostle observes, that 'in times past God suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;' that is, God did not 'draw forth his sword out of its sheath,' by which metaphor, the prophet sets forth the patience of God; he did not stir up all his wrath, 'but gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their heart with fruit and gladness.'<sup>d</sup> Moreover, the church of the Jews, before the coming of Christ, had long experience of the forbearance of God. It is said, that 'he suffered their manners forty years in the wilderness.'<sup>e</sup> And afterwards, when they often revolted to idolatry, following the customs of the nations round about them, he did not utterly destroy them, but, in their distress, raised them up deliverers. And when their iniquity was grown to such a height, that none but a God of infinite patience could have borne with them, he spared them many years before he suffered them to be carried away captive into Babylon. And finally, when their rebellion against him had arrived at the highest pitch,—when they had crucified the Lord of glory, he spared them some time, till the gospel was first preached to them, and they had rejected it, and thereby 'judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life.'<sup>f</sup> After this, the patience of God was extended to those also who endeavoured to pervert the gospel of Christ, namely, to false teachers and backsliding churches,—to whom he 'gave space to repent, but they repented not.'<sup>g</sup> We may add, that he has not yet poured forth the vials of his wrath on the antichristian powers; though he has threatened, that 'their plagues shall come in one day.'<sup>h</sup>

3. We are next to consider the method which God takes in glorifying his patience. We have already observed that, with respect to believers, the patience of God is glorified in subserviency to their salvation. With respect to others, by whom it is abused, it discovers itself in giving them warning of his judgments before he sends them. 'He speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.'<sup>i</sup> Indeed, all the prophets were sent to the church of the Jews, not only to instruct them, but to warn them of approaching judgments; and they were faithful in the delivery of their message. In what moving terms doth the prophet Jeremiah lament the miseries which were ready to befall them! And with what zeal doth he endeavour, in the whole course of his ministry, to bring them to repentance, that the storm might blow over, or, if not, that their ruin might not come upon them altogether unexpected!

When the divine warnings are not regarded, and wrath must be poured forth on an obstinate and impenitent people, it is inflicted by degrees. God sends lesser judgments before greater, or inflicts his plagues, as he did upon Egypt, one after another, not all at once. So, in his judgments upon Israel of old, as the prophet Joel observes,—first the palmer-worm, then the locust, after that the canker-worm, and then the caterpillar, devoured the fruits of the earth, one after another.<sup>k</sup> The prophet Amos also observes, that first God sent a famine among them, which

<sup>b</sup> Gen. vi. 2, 3.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 5. compared with 1 Pet. iii. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Acts xiv. 16, 17. Ezek. xxi. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Acts xiii. 18.

<sup>f</sup> Acts xiii. 46.

<sup>g</sup> Rev. ii. 21.

<sup>h</sup> Rev. xviii. 8.

<sup>i</sup> Job xxxiii. 14, 17.

<sup>k</sup> Joel i. 4.

he calls 'cleanness of teeth in all their cities;' and afterwards 'some of them were overthrown, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.'<sup>l</sup> Some think that the gradual approach of divine judgments is intended by what the prophet Hosea says, when 'the judgments of God' are compared to 'the light that goeth forth.'<sup>m</sup> This language implies more than is generally understood by it,—more than that the judgments of God should be rendered visible, as the light of the sun is; for the prophet seems to intimate, that the judgments of God should be progressive like the light of the morning, which increases until a perfect day. It is more than probable that the same thing is intimated by the same prophet, when he represents God as saying concerning Ephraim, that he would be to them 'as a moth;' which doth not consume the garment all at once, as fire does, but frets it by degrees, 'or like rottenness,' which is of a spreading nature.<sup>n</sup> Thus the judgments of God are poured forth by degrees, that together with them there may be, comparatively at least, a display of divine patience.

Again, when God sends his judgments abroad into the world, he often moderates them. None are proportionate to the demerit of sin. Accordingly, it is said of him, that being full of compassion, he 'forgave the iniquity' of a very rebellious people; that is, he did not punish them as their iniquity deserved, and therefore he 'destroyed them not, and did not stir up all his wrath.'<sup>o</sup> So the prophet Isaiah says concerning Israel, 'Hath God smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.'<sup>p</sup>

Further, when God cannot, in honour, defer his judgments any longer, he pours them forth, as it were, with reluctance; as a judge, when he passeth sentence on a criminal, doth it with a kind of regret; not insulting his misery, but rather pitying it as unavoidable, because the course of justice must not be stopped. Thus the prophet says, 'God doth not afflict willingly,' that is, with delight or pleasure, 'nor grieve the children of men;'<sup>q</sup> that is, he doth not punish them because he delights to see them miserable, but to secure the rights of his own justice in the government of the world. So when Israel had been guilty of vile ingratitude and rebellion against him, and he threatens to turn his hand upon them, and destroy them, he expresseth himself in such terms, speaking after the manner of men, as imply a kind of uneasiness: 'Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.'<sup>r</sup> And before he gave up Israel into the hands of the Assyrians, he seems, again speaking after the manner of men, to have a hesitation or debate in his own mind, whether he should do so or not: 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together.'<sup>s</sup> And when our Saviour could not prevail upon Jerusalem to repent of their sins, and embrace his doctrine,—when he was obliged to pass sentence upon them, and to tell them that the things of their peace were hid from their eyes, and that their enemies should cast a trench about the city, and should lay it even with the ground, he could not speak of it without tears; and 'when he beheld the city, he wept over it.'<sup>t</sup>

4. The next thing to be considered, concerning the patience of God, is, how the glory of it is consistent with that of his vindictive justice; or how he may be said to defer the punishment of sin, and yet appear to be a sin-hating God. It is certain, that the glory of one divine perfection cannot interfere with that of another. As justice and mercy meet together in the work of redemption, so justice and patience do not oppose each other in any of the divine dispensations. Their demands, it is true, seem to be different: justice requires that the stroke should be immediately given, while patience insists on a delay. Without this, patience does not appear to be a divine perfection; and if it is so, and its glory is as necessary to be displayed as that of any of his other perfections, it must be glorified in this

<sup>l</sup> Amos iv. 8, 11.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. xxvii. 7, 8.

<sup>t</sup> Luke xix. 41, &c.

<sup>m</sup> Hos. vi. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Lam. iii. 33.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. v. 12.

<sup>r</sup> Isa. i. 24.

<sup>o</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 38.

<sup>s</sup> Hos. xi. 8.



world, by delaying the present exercise of the highest degree of vindictive justice, or it cannot be glorified at all. Justice will be glorified throughout all the ages of eternity, in those who are its objects ; but patience can then have no glory, since, as has been before observed, the greatest degree, either of happiness or of misery, is inconsistent with its exercise. This being, therefore, a perfection which redounds so much to the divine honour, we must not suppose that there is no expedient for its being glorified, or that the glory of vindictive justice is inconsistent with it.

Now the harmony of these two perfections must be a little considered. [See Note 2 G, page 126.] Justice, it is true, obliges God to punish sin ; yet it does not oblige him to do it immediately : the time, as well as the way, is to be resolved into his sovereign will. In order to make this appear, let us consider, that the design of vindictive justice, in all the punishment it inflicts, is either to secure the glory of the holiness of God, or to assert his rights as the Governor of the world. If, then, the deferring of punishment doth not interfere with either of these, then the glory of God's patience is not inconsistent with that of his vindictive justice.

Now the glory of his holiness, as connected with the display of his patience, is sufficiently secured. Though he delays to punish sin in the highest degree, yet, at the same time, he appears to hate it, by the threatenings which he hath denounced against sinners, which shall certainly have their accomplishment. If he says that ' he is angry with the wicked every day,' and that ' his soul hateth them,' is there any reason to suppose the contrary ? Or if he has threatened that ' he will rain upon them snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, which shall be the portion of their cup,' and that because, ' as the righteous Lord, he loveth righteousness,'<sup>u</sup> is not this a sufficient security for the glory of his holiness, against any thing that might be alleged to detract from it ? If threatened judgments be not sufficient, for the present, to evince the glory of this divine perfection, it will follow, on the other hand, that the promises he has made of blessings not yet bestowed, are to be as little regarded for the encouraging of our hope, and the securing of the glory of his other perfections ; and then his holiness would be as much blemished in delaying to reward, as it can be supposed to be in delaying to punish. If, therefore, the truth of God, which will certainly accomplish his threatenings, be a present security for the glory of his holiness, it is not absolutely necessary that vindictive justice should be immediately exercised in the destruction of sinners, and so exclude the exercise of God's forbearance and long-suffering. Moreover, there are many terrible displays of God's vindictive justice in his present dealing with sinners. ' The Lord is known by the judgment which he executes,' as well as by those which he designs to pour forth, on his enemies. The wicked are now ' snared in the work of their own hands ;' and in the end they shall be ' turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.'<sup>x</sup> If vindictive justice takes occasion to inflict many temporal and spiritual judgments upon sinners in this world, then the glory of God's holiness is illustrated at the same time that his patience is prolonged. This may be observed in God's dealing with his murmuring and rebellious people in the wilderness ; which gave him occasion to take notice of the abuse of his patience, and to say, ' How long will this people provoke me ? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them ?'<sup>y</sup> Justice was now ready to strike the fatal blow. ' I will,' says God, ' smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them.' This gave Moses occasion to intercede for them, and to plead the glory of God's patience. ' The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy : Pardon,' said he, ' I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt, even until now ;' by which he means, as I humbly conceive, ' Spare thy people, as thou hast often done, when, by reason of their provocations, thou mightest justly have destroyed them.' And God answers him in the following words, ' I have pardoned, according to thy word ;' but he adds, ' As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord,' that is, with the report of the glory of his vindictive justice, which should be spread far and near ; and then he threatens them that they, that is, those who murmured against him, should not see the land of Canaan. Vindic-

u Psal. xi. 6, 7.

x Psal. ix. 16, 17.

y Numb. xiv. 11, 18—21.



tive justice, therefore, had its demands fulfilled in one respect, while patience was glorified in another. The psalmist referring to the occurrence, says, 'Thou answeredst them, O Lord,' namely, Moses' prayer for them; 'thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.'<sup>x</sup>

Consider, again, the vindictive justice of God, as tending to secure his rights as the Governor of the world, and as being ready to take vengeance for sin, which attempts to control his sovereign authority, and disturb the order of his government. The stroke of justice may be suspended for a time, that it may make way for the exercise of patience, provided there be no just occasion given for men to trample on the sovereignty of God, despise his authority, or rebel against him, without fear. Now these consequences will not necessarily result from his extending forbearance to sinners. We do not find that delaying to inflict punishment among men is any prejudice to their government; and why should we suppose that the divine government should suffer any injury by it? When a prince puts off the trial of a malefactor for a time, in order that the indictment may be more fully proved, and the equity of his proceedings may more evidently appear, the postponement is always reckoned a greater excellency in his administration, than if he should proceed too hastily. And we never find that such a course tends to embolden the criminal, as impunity would do; for he is punished, in part, by the loss of his liberty, and if he be convicted, he loses the privilege of an innocent subject, his life is forfeited, and he is in daily expectation of having it taken away. Now if such a method, or the allowing of a reprieve to some for a time, tends to secure the rights of a government, may not God stop the immediate proceedings of vindictive justice for a time, without the least infringement either on his holiness, or on his rectoral justice?

5. We come now to consider how the patience of God is to be improved by us. Since it is a divine perfection, and there is a revenue of glory due to God for the display of it, we ought to exercise those graces, which it engages us to. Some of the divine attributes tend to excite our fear; but this should draw forth our admiration and praise. We have special reason to adore and admire it, when we consider how justly he might destroy us. The best man on earth may say, with the psalmist, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?'<sup>y</sup> He need not watch for occasions, or diligently search out some of the inadvertencies of life, in order to find matter for our conviction and condemnation. The multitude and the heinous aggravation of our sins, proclaim our desert of punishment, and might provoke his vengeance, and immediately draw it down upon us. What farther enhances our guilt is, that we provoke him, though laid under the highest obligations to serve and love him. How easily, too, might he bring ruin and destruction upon us! He does not forbear to punish us for want of power, as earthly kings often do; or because the exercise of justice might weaken his government, or occasion some rebellions which could not easily be put a stop to. David says concerning himself, that he was 'weak, though anointed king,' and that on occasion of Joab's having forfeited his life, when the necessity of affairs required the suspending of his punishment, 'the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him.'<sup>z</sup> No such thing can be said of God; he is represented as 'slow to anger, and great in power';<sup>a</sup> that is, he does not punish, though he easily could. It would be no greater difficulty for him immediately to destroy an ungodly world, than it is to crush a moth or a worm, or to break a leaf. Finite power can make no resistance against that which is infinite. What are briars and thorns before the consuming fire?

Let us take heed that we do not abuse the divine patience. It is a crime to abuse the mercy of God, even in the smallest instances of it; and much more is it so to slight and contemn the riches of his forbearance or mercy, as extended to so great a length as it has been to most of us. This crime is committed by those who infer from his forbearing to pour forth his fury on sinners, that he neglects the government of the world; or who take occasion from it to deny a providence; or who, because his threatenings are not executed at present, do, as it were, defy him to do his worst against them. This some are represented as doing, with an uncommon degree of presumption, and with a scoff; for they are termed 'scoffers,

<sup>x</sup> Psal. xcix. 8.<sup>y</sup> Psal. cxxx. 3.<sup>z</sup> 2 Sam. iii. 39.<sup>a</sup> Nahum i. 3.

walking after their own lusts ; saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation.<sup>b</sup> Again, God's patience is abused by those who take occasion from it to sin presumptuously ; and who, because he not only delays to punish, but, at the same time, expresses his willingness to receive returning sinners at what time soever they truly repent, become emboldened to persist in their rebellion, concluding that it is time enough to submit to him. This is not only to abuse, but, as it were, to wear out his patience : it is to provoke his indignation, like them of whom it is said, that 'because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.'<sup>c</sup> But you will say, "These are uncommon degrees of wickedness, which only the vilest part of mankind are chargeable with." We add, therefore, that a bare neglect to improve our present season and day of grace, or to embrace the great salvation offered in the gospel, is an abuse of God's patience. This will certainly affect the greatest number of those who are favoured with the gospel-dispensation. Indeed, who are they that improve it as they ought? All therefore are said, more or less, to abuse the patience of God,—a consideration which affords matter of great humiliation in his sight. Now, that we may be duly sensible of this sin, together with the consequences of it, let us consider that it argues the highest ingratitude, —especially, in a professing people. The apostle, when reproving the Jews for this sin, puts a very great emphasis on every word when he says, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering?'<sup>d</sup> Let us consider, also, that the consequence of this sin is very destructive ; inasmuch as the opportunity afforded us by the divine patience is the only one which we can ever enjoy for seeking after those things which relate to our eternal welfare. What stress does the apostle lay on the word 'now,' which is twice repeated, as well as on the word 'behold,' which notes that he had something remarkable to communicate, when he says, 'Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.'<sup>e</sup> Another consideration, and a very awakening one, is, that the abuse of God's patience will expose finally impenitent sinners to a greater degree of his vengeance. When the forbearance of God had been extended to Israel for many years, from his bringing them up out of the land of Egypt, and the exercise of it had been attended all that time with the means of grace, and many warnings of approaching judgments, he tells them, 'You only have I known, of all the families of the earth ; therefore will I punish you,' that is, my wrath shall fall more heavily upon you, 'for all your iniquities.'<sup>f</sup> And when God is represented, as coming to reckon with Babylon, the cup of his wrath, it is said, must be filled double. 'How much she hath glorified herself,' saith God, 'and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her ; for she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.'<sup>g</sup>

Let us, on the other hand, improve God's patience, by duly considering the great end and design of it, and what encouragement it affords to universal holiness. It is a great relief to those who are at the very brink of despair ; for if, apprehending themselves to be yet in a state of unregeneracy, they cannot say that it has hitherto led them to repentance, let them consider that a door of hope is still open, and that the golden sceptre is held forth, the invitation given to come to Christ. Let this consideration excite us to a diligent attendance on the means of grace ; for though forbearance is not to be mistaken, as it is by many, for forgiveness, yet we are encouraged to wait and hope for it, in all God's holy institutions, according to the tenor of the gospel. And they who are not only spared but pardoned, to whom grace has not only been offered but savingly applied, may be encouraged to hope for farther displays of grace, as well as to improve, with the greatest diligence and thankfulness, what they have received.

Finally, Let us consider the great obligation we are laid under, by the patience of God, to a constant exercise of the grace of patience, in our behaviour towards God and man. We are laid under the highest engagements by it to submit to

b 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

c 2 Cor. vi. 2.

d Eccl. viii. 11.

e Amos iii. 2.

f Rom. ii. 4.

g Rev. xviii. 6, 7.



God's disposing will, and, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content, without murmuring, or repining, when under afflictive providences. 'Shall we receive good at his hand, and shall we not receive evil?'<sup>h</sup> Has he exercised so long forbearance towards us, not only before we were converted, when our life was a constant course of rebellion against him; but has he since, not only passed by, but forgiven, innumerable offences—and shall we think it strange when he testifies his displeasure against us in any instances? Shall we be froward and uneasy, because he does not immediately give us what we desire, or deliver us from those evils we groan under? Let us exercise patience, also, in our behaviour towards men. Shall we give way to, or express unbecoming resentment against those whom we converse with, for injuries done us, which are often rather imaginary than real? Or if they are very great, as well as undeserved, let not our passions exceed their due bounds; much more, let us not meditate revenge, but consider how many injuries the great God has passed over in us, and how long his patience has been extended towards us.

### *The Faithfulness of God.*

God is abundant in truth. That we may understand what is meant by this perfection, we may observe the difference between his being called a true God, and a God of truth; though they seem to import the same thing, and are not always distinguished in scripture. Thus he that receiveth Christ's testimony, is said to 'set to his seal that God is true,' that is, that he is a God of truth, in accomplishing what he has promised respecting the salvation of his people; and elsewhere it is said, 'Let God be true, but every man a liar,' that is, let God be esteemed a God of truth. Yet his being the true God, and his being the God of truth, are, for the most part, distinguished. Hence when he is called the true God, or the only true God, the phrase does not denote one distinct perfection of the divine nature, but the Godhead; and it includes all his divine perfections, and represents him in contrast to all others who are called gods, but are not so by nature. This point, however, will be more particularly considered in the next Answer. When, on the other hand, we speak of him as the God of truth, we mean that he is true to his word,—a God that cannot lie,—whose faithfulness is unblemished, because, as a God of infinite holiness, whatever he has spoken, he will certainly bring to pass. This perfection respects either his threatenings, or his promises. As to the former, it is said that 'the judgments of God,' that is, the sentences he has passed against sinners, 'are according to truth';<sup>i</sup> and the display of his vindictive justice is called, 'his accomplishing his fury.'<sup>k</sup> This renders him the object of fear; and it is, as it were, a wall of fire round about his law, to secure its glory from the insults of his enemies. As to his faithfulness in his promises, he is said to be 'the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, unto a thousand generations.'<sup>l</sup> This is that which encourages his people to hope and trust in him, and to expect that blessedness which none of his perfections would give them a sufficient ground to lay claim to, were it not promised, and the promises of it secured by his infinite faithfulness. Almighty power is able to give us happiness, and mercy and goodness can communicate every thing that may contribute to it; but it does not follow that they will do so, since God is under no natural obligation to glorify these perfections. But when he is pleased to give us a promise of happiness, and the accomplishment of this is made sure to us by his infinite faithfulness, the blessings we need become not only possible but certain, and strong consolation is afforded to the heirs of salvation. It is this that renders things future as certain as though they were present, and so lays a foundation for our rejoicing in hope of eternal life, whatever difficulties may seem to lie in the way.

Here we may take occasion to consider the blessings which are secured by the faithfulness of God. Some of these respect mankind in general, or are bestowed in the ordinary course of divine providence,—such as that the world should be

<sup>h</sup> Job ii. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. ii. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Ezk. vi. 12.

<sup>l</sup> Deut. vii. 9.



preserved, and 'all flesh not perish out of it,' from the deluge till Christ's second coming, and that, during this time, the regular course of nature should not be altered, but 'that seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, should not cease.'<sup>m</sup> There are also promises made to the church in general,—such as that it should have a being in the world, notwithstanding all the shocks of persecution which it is exposed to, that the ordinances of divine worship should be continued, and that, 'in all places where he records his name, he will come to his people and bless them.'<sup>n</sup> He has promised also that his church shall be increased and built up,—that to Shiloh, the great Redeemer, should the 'gathering of the people be,'—that he would 'multiply them that they should not be few, and also glorify them that they should not be small,'<sup>o</sup>—and that the glory should be of an increasing nature, especially that which it should arrive to in the latter ages of time, immediately before its exchanging this militant state for a triumphant one in heaven. Moreover, there are many great and precious promises made to particular believers. These every one of them have a right to lay claim to; and this they are often enabled to do by faith, which depends entirely on this perfection. These promises are such as respect the increase of grace,—that they shall 'go from strength to strength,' or that 'they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,'<sup>p</sup>—that they shall be recovered after great backslidings,<sup>q</sup> and be enabled to persevere in that grace which is begun in them, till it is crowned with complete victory,<sup>r</sup>—that they shall be made partakers of that inward peace and joy which accompanies or flows from the truth of grace,<sup>s</sup>—and that all this shall be followed by perfect blessedness in heaven at last.<sup>t</sup> The scripture abounds with such promises, suited to every condition, and fitted to afford relief to God's people under all the difficulties they meet with in the world; and the accomplishment of them is made sure to them by the divine faithfulness.

It is objected against this divine attribute, that God, in some instances, has not fulfilled his threatenings, which has tended to embolden some in a course of obstinacy and rebellion against him,—particularly that the first threatening was not executed as soon as man fell; for though God told our first parents, that 'in the very day they should eat of the forbidden fruit, they should surely die,' yet Adam lived after this nine hundred and thirty years.<sup>u</sup> It is also objected, that though God threatened to destroy Nineveh, within forty days after Jonah was sent to publish this message to them,<sup>x</sup> they continued in a flourishing state many years after.—As to what respects the first threatening, that death should immediately ensue upon sin being committed, we shall have occasion to speak on it in its proper place.<sup>y</sup> All that needs be replied to it at present is, that the threatening was, in some respect, executed the day, yea, the moment in which our first parents sinned. If we understand it in a legal sense, they were immediately brought into a state of condemnation; which, in a forensic sense, is often called death. They were immediately separated from God, the fountain of blessedness, and plunged into all those depths of misery which were the consequence of their fall. Or if we understand 'death' to mean, what certainly was one ingredient in it, either the separation of soul and body, or the greatest degree of punishment, consisting in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, it is sufficient to say, that man's being *liable* to it was the principal thing intended in the threatening. Certainly God did not design to tie up his own hands, so as to render it impossible for him to remit the offence, or to recover the fallen creature out of this deplorable state. If you take 'death' for that which is natural, which was not inflicted till nine hundred and thirty years after, we may say that his being on the very day that he sinned exposed to it, or brought under an unavoidable necessity of dying, might be called his dying from that time. The scripture will warrant our using the word in this sense; for the apostle, speaking to those who were, by sin, liable to death, says, 'The body is dead because of sin,'<sup>z</sup> that is, it is exposed to death,

<sup>m</sup> Gen. ix. 11. compared with chap. viii. 22.      <sup>n</sup> Exod. xx. 24.      <sup>o</sup> Gen. xlix. 10. compared with Jer. xxx. 19.      <sup>p</sup> Psal. lxxxiv. 7. and Isa. xl. 31.      <sup>q</sup> Psal. xxxvii. 24. Psal. lxxxix. 30.—23.  
<sup>r</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 9. Rom. xvi. 20. Job xvii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 57.      <sup>s</sup> Isa. xl. 1. chap. lvii. 19 chap. xxxii. 17.  
<sup>t</sup> Psal. lxxxiii. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 8.      <sup>u</sup> Gen. ii. 17. compared with chap. v. 5.      <sup>x</sup> Jon. iii. 4.  
<sup>y</sup> See Quest. xx.      <sup>z</sup> Rom. viii. 10.

as the consequence of sin, though it was not actually dead. And if we take death for a liability to eternal destruction, the threatening must be supposed to contain a tacit condition implying that man was to expect nothing but eternal death, unless some expedient were found out which the miserable creature then knew nothing of, to recover him from the state into which he was fallen.—As to what concerns the sparing of Nineveh, we have sufficient ground to conclude that there was a condition annexed to the threatening that it should be destroyed. The meaning therefore, is, that they should be destroyed in forty days, if they did not repent. This condition was designed to be made known to them; otherwise Jonah's preaching would have been to no purpose, and the warning given would have answered no valuable end. It is plain, too, that the Ninevites understood the matter in this sense; otherwise there would have been no room for repentance. God, therefore, connected the condition with the threatening. And as, on the one hand, he designed to give them repentance,—so that the event was not dubious and undetermined by him, as depending on their conduct, abstracted from his providence; so, on the other hand, there was no reflection cast on his truth,—because the provisioning expedient for their deliverance was as much known by them as the threatening itself.

It is objected that several promises have not had their accomplishment. Thus there are several promises of spiritual blessings which many believers do not experience the accomplishment of in this life,—a circumstance which has given occasion to some to say with the psalmist, 'Doth his promise fail for evermore?'<sup>a</sup> All the promises of God are not literally fulfilled in this world to every particular believer. The promise of increase of grace is not actually fulfilled, while God suffers his people to backslide from him, and while the work of grace is rather declining than sensibly advancing. Nor are the promises respecting the assurance and joy of faith fulfilled to one that is sinking into the depths of despair,—or those that respect the presence of God in ordinances, to such as are destitute of the influences of his grace in observing them,—or those of victory over temptation, to such as are not only assaulted but frequently overcome by Satan, when it is as much as they can do to stand their ground against him. There are also many other instances of a similiar nature. Notwithstanding all these, however, the faithfulness of God may be vindicated, if we consider, that there is no promise of which there are not some instances of accomplishment. This fact is a sufficient evidence to the world, that there are such blessings bestowed as God has promised. Those, again, who are denied these blessings, may possibly be mistaken when they conclude themselves to be believers; and then it is no wonder that they are destitute of them, for God has promised to give joy and peace only in a way of believing, or to give first the truth of grace, and then its comfortable fruits and effects. But we will suppose that they are not mistaken, but have experienced the grace of God in truth, and then their graces are so defective that they know but little of their own imperfections, if they do not take occasion from a consciousness of these to justify God for withholding his blessings from them, and to adore, rather than call in question, the equity of his proceeding. If remunerative justice be not laid under obligation to bestow these blessings by any thing performed by us, then certainly the faithfulness of God is not to be impeached because he is pleased to deny them. Again, in denying these blessings, he often takes occasion to advance his own glory in some other way: he tries the faith and patience of his people, corrects them for their miscarriages, humbles them by his dealings with them, and overrules all events for their good in the end,—which is an equivalent for those joys and comforts which are withheld. Indeed, God has never promised these blessings to any, but with this reserve, that if he thinks it necessary for his own glory and their good, to bring about their salvation some other way, he will do it; so that, when he does so, not the least occasion is given to detract from the glory of his faithfulness. All those promises, moreover, which have not had their accomplishment in kind, in this world, shall be accomplished in the next, with the greatest advantage. Believers will then have no reason to complain of even the least unfaithfulness in the divine ad-

<sup>a</sup> Psal. lxxvii. 8.



ministration. If rivers of pleasure at God's right hand for ever, will not compensate for the want of some comforts while we are in this world, or silence all objections against his present dealings with men, nothing can do it; or if the full accomplishment of all the promises hereafter will not secure the glory of God's faithfulness, it is a sign that men who deny it are disposed to contend with the Almighty. To such, therefore, we may justly apply God's own words to Job, 'He that reproveth God, let him answer it.' 'Wilt thou disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?'<sup>b</sup>

We shall now consider how the faithfulness of God ought to be improved by us. The consideration of it may be a preservative against presumption, on the one hand, and despair, on the other. Let no one harden himself in his iniquity, or think that, because the threatenings are not yet fully accomplished, they never shall. It is one thing for God to delay to execute them, and another thing for him to resolve not to do it. Because 'our houses are safe from fear, and the rod of God is not upon them,' we may vainly conclude that 'the bitterness of death is past;' but let it be considered, that 'the wicked are reserved for the day of destruction,—that they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.'<sup>c</sup> The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. His threatenings lay him under an obligation to punish finally impenitent sinners; because he is a God of truth. Let none therefore harden themselves against him, or expect impunity in a course of open rebellion against him. On the other hand, let not believers give way to despair of obtaining mercy, or conclude that, because God is withdrawn, and hides his face from them, he will never return, or that because his promises are not immediately fulfilled, they never shall. His faithfulness is their great security. 'He will ever be mindful of his covenant.'<sup>d</sup>

Again, Let us compare the providences of God with his word, and see how every thing tends to set forth his faithfulness. We are very stupid, if we take no notice of the great things which are done in the world; and we behold them to little purpose, if we do not observe how this divine perfection is glorified in them. The world continues to this day, because God has several things yet to do in it, in pursuance of his promises. The whole number of the elect are to be gathered, and brought in to Christ; their graces must be tried, and their faith built up in the same way as it has been in former ages. The church, in consequence, is preserved; and, according to his promise, 'the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.'<sup>e</sup> As it was of old, so we observe now, that the various changes which are made in civil affairs are all rendered subservient to the church's welfare. 'The earth helps the woman,'<sup>f</sup>—not so much from its own design, as by the appointment of providence. And why does God order it so, but that his promises might be fulfilled? The continuance of his ordinances, and the efficacy and success of them in the experience of believers, as the consequence of his presence with them, which he has given them ground to expect 'unto the end of the world,'<sup>g</sup> are blessings in which his faithfulness is eminently glorified.

Further, This divine perfection is a sure foundation for our faith. As his truth, with respect to what he has revealed, is an infallible ground for our faith of assent; so his faithfulness, in fulfilling his promises, affords the highest encouragement for our trust and dependence on him. Hence we are said to 'commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator';<sup>h</sup> and when we lay the whole stress of our salvation upon him, we have no reason to entertain any doubt about the issue. Moreover, are we exposed to evils in this world? We may conclude, that as 'he has delivered, and does deliver,' so we have reason to 'trust in him, that he will deliver us.'<sup>i</sup> And is there much to be done for us, to make us meet for heaven? We may be 'confident of this very thing, that he that has begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'<sup>k</sup>

Again, The faithfulness of God should be improved by us, as a remedy against that uneasiness and anxiety of mind which we often have about the future, especially when events seem to run counter to our expectation. When, for example,

b Job xl. 2. compared with ver. 8.  
e Matt. xvi. 18. f Rev. xii. 16.  
k Psal. i. 6.

c Job xxi. 9. compared with ver. 30.  
g Matt. xxviii. 20. h 1 Pet. iv. 19.

d Psal. cxi. 5.  
i 2 Cor. i. 10.



there is but a very melancholy prospect before us, as to what concerns the glory of God and the flourishing state of his church in the world, and we are ready to say with Joshua, 'Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy great name?'<sup>1</sup> or when we have many sad thoughts of heart about the rising generation, and are in doubt whether they will adhere to or abandon the interest of Christ; when we are ready to fear whether there will be a reserve of faithful men, who will stand up for his gospel, and fill the places of those who are called off the stage, after having served their generation by the will of God; when we are too much oppressed with cares about our outward condition in the world; when, like Christ's disciples, we are immoderately thoughtful 'what we shall eat, what we shall drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed,'<sup>m</sup> or how we shall be able to conflict with the difficulties that lie before us,—our great relief against all our solicitude is to be derived from the faithfulness of God. Since godliness has the promise annexed to it, of 'the life that now is,' as well as of 'that which is to come,'<sup>n</sup> this promise shall have its accomplishment, so far as shall most redound to God's glory, and our real advantage.

Finally, The consideration of the faithfulness of God should be improved, to humble us, and to fill us with shame and confusion of face, when we consider how treacherously we have dealt with him,—how unsteadfast we have been in his covenant,—how often we have broken our own promises and resolutions, that we would walk more closely with him,—how frequently we have backslidden from him, contrary to all the engagements which we have been laid under. Have we found any unfaithfulness in him? Has he, in the least instance, been worse than his word? As God says, when he reproves his people, 'What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?'<sup>o</sup>

1 Josh. vii. 9.

m Matt. vi. 31.

n 1 Tim. iv. 8.

o Jer. ii. 5.

[NOTE Z. *The Communicable and the Incommunicable Perfections of God.*—The distinction between communicable and incommunicable perfections of Deity, ought not to be made. All the divine perfections are alike absolute, alike glorious, alike infinite, alike identical with divinity. They are not, as Dr. Ridgeley himself afterwards teaches, to be considered as apart from God, or as properties of the divine subsistence. God's perfections are God himself, and God himself is his perfections. To suppose some of them to be more and some of them less distinctive of Deity, or some to be communicable and some incommunicable, is to conceive of the divine subsistence abstractedly from itself, or to compare God with God. Mere 'resemblances' between the creature and the Creator do not lessen the distance between finitude and infinitude. Holiness, power, and faithfulness, as they exist in Deity, are as truly infinite, as truly characteristic of divinity, as though no resemblances of them were found in men and angels; and, as divine perfections, are as strictly incommunicable, and as entirely remote from any properties of a creature, as immutability and independence. All resemblances between what is infinite and what is finite are distant, analogical, and remotely comparative. If holiness be called a communicable perfection, because man was created a sinless being, immutability may as justly be called so, because the physical movements and agencies of the universe were made uniform and unvarying. Durability and unchangeableness are as much illustrated by the stability of the earth and of the 'everlasting hills,' and the regularity of the seasons and of chemical agencies, as holiness and truth are by the character impressed on Adam in creation. What some writers have termed distinctively the natural and the moral perfections of God, are displayed respectively in his natural and his moral works, and have produced in these just those remote resemblances whence we derive our ideas of their nature. Hence any distinction which is warrantable, has reference, not to the perfections themselves, but to the sphere in which they are displayed, and the effects which they produce. When we think of God as making worlds out of nothing, we speak of his power; when we think of him as the source of all created being, we speak of his self-existence; when we think of him as sustaining universal nature, we speak of his independence; when we think of him as entertaining uniform purposes, and as governing his creatures by uniform laws, we speak of his immutability; when we think of him as opposing sin, as creating minds imbued with love to his service, and as regenerating and sanctifying depraved intelligences, we speak of his holiness; when we think of him as making promises, and invariably fulfilling them, or as establishing principles, and invariably verifying them, we speak of his faithfulness; and when we think of his delaying to inflict punishment on transgressors, of his planning, revealing, and establishing the covenant of redemption, and of his enlightening the understandings, subduing the hostility, renewing the wills, and captivating the affections of believers in Christ, we speak of his patience, his mercy, and his grace. In all of these cases, however,—in each or any as truly as in others—there is simply a display of his perfections,—a display of Deity. In none, is there a *communication* of his perfections: in none, the imparting of such a peculiar or distinguishing resemblance of himself, as occasions or warrants an abstract conception of one of his attributes from another. Every thing divine is essentially, or in its very nature, incommunicable.

The distinction between communicable and incommunicable perfections of Deity, like many other distinctions introduced by the scholastic theology, has marred the simplicity of scripture instruction, and afforded encouragement to daring speculation and to error. High Arianism, in par-

ticular, avails itself of it, to sanction and defend its insidious and destructive dogma respecting the semi-divinity of Christ. But let just views of the divine perfections be entertained, let them be seen as essentially incommunicable, and as just Deity himself, and all such speculations as those of Arianism will stand as stultified in the view of reason as they appear wicked in the eye of revelation. —Ed.]

[NOTE 2 A. *Connexion between Uncompoundedness and Eternal Duration.*—The argument for the future eternity of God from his being 'void of all composition,' is based on false premises, and ought not to be used. The dissolution of some beings, and the future eternal duration of others, does not, as Dr. Ridgeley assumes, depend on their being compounded or not compounded of parts. Angels and the souls of men are 'void of composition,' and yet are not necessarily eternal. The duration, as truly as the origin and the sustenance, of their being, depends entirely on the divine will, and arises solely from the divine purpose. The glorified bodies of saints, on the other hand, will be compounded of parts, and yet will not be subject to dissolution, but will exist for ever. Even man's natural body, as it was originally created, possessed perfect adaptation to perpetuity of existence; and not till doomed to corruptibility by the divine will in punishment of sin, did it contain any seed or germ of dissolution. Dr. Ridgeley's idea that 'dissolution arises from the contrariety of the parts' of compounded beings, and from 'the tendency of these to destroy one another,' is utterly incompatible with the doctrine of the divine sovereignty, with the penal nature of mortality and corruptibility in man, and with the redemptional and gracious character of the eternal existence of the souls and bodies of the saved. His adoption of the idea, and the use which he makes of it in raising an argument for the future eternity of God, are an illustration of how prone even so well-toned and strong a mind as his is to err, when it wanders from the supreme guidance of revelation, and attempts to prove an abstract or elementary doctrine from what he terms 'the light of nature.' So obvious a truth as God's future eternity is peculiarly liable to be obscured, and rarely receives elucidation, when attempted to be proved or illustrated by any but plain scriptural considerations.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 B. *Omnipresence*—Dr. Ridgeley, in this paragraph, distinguishes four kinds of omnipresence,—first, such as Paul had when he was at Corinth in spirit, while absent in body,—secondly, such as a king has, when he is in many places by his authority,—thirdly, such as matter has, when viewed as in all parts of the universe,—and lastly, such as is proper and peculiar to Deity. Now these are so essentially different each from the others, that they ought to be all designated by different names, and treated as entirely distinct things. The first is metaphorical ubiquity; the second is representation; the third is extension; and only the last is omnipresence. Extension is a property of matter, and ought no more to be placed in the same category with a divine perfection, than cubicity, opacity, colour, or any other physical property. Representation—especially the representation of a king in the person of viceroys and inferior magistrates—implies the necessary absence and even the personal ignorance of the individual represented; and, so far from possessing affinity or resemblance, it exhibits contrariety or contrast, to the divine perfection. Ubiquity, indeed, may require to be distinguished from omnipresence; but as a literal property, it does not exist. What is denoted by it is the capacity of being in many places at once; and it is simply an invention of the schoolmen, applied to the glorified humanity of Christ, to obviate the physical difficulties, or the physical impossibility, implied in their doctrine of transubstantiation. Metaphorical ubiquity, or the capacity of being in many places 'in spirit' or in imagination, is, 'as a phrase,' only a remote accommodation of the scholastic invention; for even it does not imply the capacity of thinking of many places at once, but the capacity of thinking of many places, or of imaginarily visiting them, in rapid succession. Words and ideas are only obscured and confounded, when extension, representation, and metaphorical ubiquity, are placed in the same connexion, and classed under the same generic epithet as divine omnipresence.

Dr. Ridgeley, in the paragraph which follows, makes another distinction, which, though not so grotesque and mischievous as this, is at least unnecessary, and ought therefore to be avoided. He distinguishes between the essential and the influential presence of God; and again distributes the influential presence into common and special. Now the essential presence of God is just his omnipresence. Why, then, depart from that designation, and introduce another? Can any reason be assigned, except that an opportunity is sought to flourish a distinction,—to exhibit an antithesis,—to attract the ear with the alliterative jingle 'essential presence,' 'influential presence?' Better phrases, because more scriptural, may be found, too, to denote what is meant by 'the common' and 'the special' presence of God. If by God's common presence is meant, as Dr. Ridgeley says, 'that by which he upholds and governs all things,' its proper name is either power or providence. 'Special presence,' though not seriously objectionable, would be advantageously substituted by 'gracious presence.' Either let it be retained, however, and let Dr. Ridgeley's other distinctions—or rather the scholastic distinctions which he adopts—be exploded; and there will remain only two phrases of kindred character,—'special presence,' and 'omnipresence;' while other terms will be used—'providence,' 'ubiquity,' 'representation,' and 'extension'—as distinct from one another, and from the word 'omnipresence,' as the ideas which they respectively express. How preferable is a terminology which possesses a distinct word for every distinct idea, to one which clusters under the same epithet the most various, or even contrary conceptions, and creates occasion for ostentatious and bewildering distinctions! On all subjects, indeed, such a terminology does not exist; but whenever, as on the subjects clustered under the head of omnipresence, it is sanctioned by scripture, and virtually presented in its simple phraseology, it ought to be followed and cherished as no mean expositor of revealed truths.—Ed.]

NOTE 2 C. *The Absolute and the Ordinate Power of God.*—The distinction between absolute and ordinate power is founded on a metaphysical view of the human mind. Man's will is determined by motives. He has the power of acting in one of two, or in any of several ways; and he acts in



only one of them, according to the determination of his will. His power, viewed irrespectively of his will, is called absolute; and, viewed as determined or defined by it, is called ordinate. But can the same distinction be with propriety made in reference to God? Man's motives, or those qualities in objects, considerations, or inducements, which determine his will, and define the exercise of his power, are all exterior to himself. His will is dependent and relative: it is swayed by objects and influences which come unbidden before him, and acts, not absolutely, as if he stood alone and independent, but in relation to the circumstances in which he is placed by supreme sovereign disposal. God's will, on the contrary, is strictly absolute: it is his 'mere good pleasure,'—the counsel of his own will: it acts, as to motive, in self-existent and supreme independence. God, and his will, and his power, and his glory, are phrases expressive, not of distinct things, but of different modes of contemplating Deity. His power, view it as we may, is co-extensive with his will and his glory: it is power to do whatever he wills, or whatever comports with his holiness and wisdom. He wills whatever his power performs; and his power performs whatever his will determines. Contemplated either as resolving, or as acting, or as displaying any one perfection, he is supreme, infinite, independent, incomprehensible, the same in character, the same in subsistence, the same in essential manifestation. Caution, therefore, ought to be used not to raise a distinction which suggests any such idea, in our views of Deity, as that of 'ordinate power' in man,—of a limitation or defining of ability by volitions dependent on exterior motives. Whatever is proper or peculiar to the creature, must not, by any analogy, be made the basis of a distinction with reference to the Creator. The instance adduced by Dr. Ridgeley in illustration of his distinction—the divine economy with regard to the fallen angels—ought to be viewed in connexion, not with God's power, but with the character or glory of his moral administration.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2D. *The Objects of God's Knowledge.*—As intelligent agents, we know, in many instances, what things we can do, though we will never do them.' Does Dr. Ridgeley, by this statement, mean that we know what things we have resolved not to do,—that we know what things we have power but not inclination to do,—or that we know contingently effects of our power which may be prevented by our will? His words may be construed to bear any of the three meanings; and, whichever of the three they bear, they fail to sanction or illustrate his position in reference to the objects of God's knowledge. To know what things we have resolved not to do, is only negatively to know what things we have resolved to do: it is to know actual objects or events in the light of their opposites; for there is no knowledge, no idea of an absolute non-entity or negation. To know what things we have power but not inclination to do, is simply to know, in any given circumstances, that we are dependent creatures, influenced by motives, and that, in the exercise of freedom to adopt any of several modes of acting, we are restricted to one by the determination of our will. Again, to know contingently effects of our power which may be prevented by our will, or to know things as contingently existing, is simply either to conjecture what shall happen or exist, or to substitute fiction for reality, imagination for discernment. Now, in none of these three ways which have been named is there any affinity between man's 'knowing what things he can do, though he will never do them,' and God's 'knowing many things that he will not do.' Knowledge, on God's part, of what he has purposed not to do, is either knowledge of nonentities, or knowledge, negatively considered, of what he has proposed to do. But knowledge of nonentities is no knowledge whatever, and is not to be predicated of God. Again, knowledge of several modes of action, one of which must be adopted to the exclusion of the others, according to the determination of the will by motives, is predicable only of a dependent being, the circumstances of whose position are disposed and controlled by a superior power. As to knowing things contingently, in the sense either of conjecture or of imagination, so far from being predicable of God, it exhibits a direct contrast to the infallible certainty of his knowledge. Dr. Ridgeley, in all he says respecting 'God's knowing many things that he will not do,' seems to forget the essential difference which exists between the will of God and the will of man. Possibility and contingency, in reference to what may or can be done, are ideas which affect only the imperfect, dependent, finite knowledge of the creature. What can exist, what shall exist, and what are objects of knowledge, are all the same thing with God. His power to do, his purpose to do, and his knowledge of what he will do, are strictly one thing viewed in different phases. His knowledge, his will, and his power, are matters of distinct conception only in accommodation to the capacities of the creature: they are not distinct in themselves, nor are they distinct from God. All are different from the corresponding attributes of the creature, not only in degree, but in essential nature. Man's power is derived and contingent; his will is dependent and relative; his knowledge is exoteric in its sources and evidential in its basis. To say that 'he knows many things which he can do, though he will never do them,' is consistent with the imperfection of his nature; but to say the same thing of God seems derogatory to his independence, and to the undividedness of his attributes.

Dr. Ridgeley's appeal in support of his sentiment to scripture, appears to be far from successful. God's 'calling things that be not as though they were,' is simply his creating something out of nothing,—his acting with the same power without materials as with them. His knowledge respecting Saul and the men of Keilah, was not knowledge of 'what they would have done, had not his providence prevented it,' but knowledge of the secret and vain purposes of their hearts: in other words, it was not knowledge of events as contingent, but absolute knowledge of actual and ineffective intentions.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 E. *Man's natural knowledge of God.*—To say that God has 'instamped the knowledge of his perfections on the souls and consciences of men,' savours strongly of the doctrine of innate ideas. Are men born with a knowledge of God's perfections? Have they it constitutionally 'instamped' on their minds? If so, they are born with a revelation,—they have constitutionally an acquaintance with the divine justice, the divine patience, the divine mercy, the divine grace, and, by consequence, the divine method of saving the guilty. An innate revelation, a constitutional 'in-



stamping' of religious knowledge, must either be so defective as to be useless, or include all the elements of divine truth. But where is the evidence from consciousness, observation, or the testimony of scripture, that, even in one particular such a revelation or instamping is possessed? Do not universal experience, universal history, the condition even of man in paradise, the principles of all God's moral administration in our world, and the existence and progressive grant of a written revelation, expressly and forcibly contradict it?

The Gentiles 'who have not the law doing by nature the things contained in the law, and being a law unto themselves,' proves only that they had consciences; just as Red Indians' acquaintance with sounds and colours, though they are destitute of science, and their ability to reason, though destitute of formal logic and mathematics, prove that they have the faculties of perception and judgment. Man is born with a power of perception; and, as his mind expands, he finds himself possessed of organs and exterior facilities for acquiring ideas. He is born with a power of judging; and, as his mind expands, he enjoys constant occasion to detect relations among objects, and to form opinions. He is born with a power of distinguishing between right and wrong; and as his mind expands, he has access to continual lessons, practical and theoretic, for obtaining moral perceptions. Only his powers, however, are innate: the objects of them are exoteric, and the materials with which they work are acquired. Just as he is not born with ideas of towns and landscapes, or with opinions of cookery and the chase; so he is not born with a knowledge of God and of duty. Yet as certainly as his faculty of perception is addressed by sounds and colours, and his faculty of judging by the collisions or juxtaposition or chemical influences of objects, so certainly is his faculty of moral discernment—his power of knowing right from wrong—his conscience—addressed immediately, preceptively, or traditionally by revelation. Heathens, even in their darkest state, enjoy some remnants of teaching from heaven. All educationally acquire some perceptions of right and wrong,—some remote discernment of religious obligation and moral duty. All, in the absence of 'the law'—'the law of Moses,' a written revelation—are a law unto themselves; and though they are 'natural men,' though they are still in the state of 'nature' peculiar to the children of wrath, they do 'by nature the things,' some things, 'contained in the law.' Who does not see, however, that the state of 'nature' in which they are a law unto themselves, is the state not of their constitutional structure, not of their birth, not of their lactus or suckling condition, but of their unregeneracy, their alienation from the life of God, their destitution of spirituality and of a written revelation?—ED.]

[NOTE 2 F. *The disposing, the vindictive, and the remunerative Justice of God.*—The scholastic distinctions, which Dr. Ridgeley adopts, between the disposing and the distributive, and again between the vindictive and the remunerative, justice of God, tend, not to illustrate, but to obscure a subject of great simplicity. The divine justice, view it as we may, is simply infinite rectitude, infallible equity, God doing what is right. To speak of his 'disposing justice,' and define it to be 'the shining forth of his holiness in all the dispensations of his providence,' is just to give a general and not very appropriate name to the mingled exercise of the divine wisdom, the divine mercy, the divine grace, and what is called the divine vindictive and remunerative justice. Confusion of ideas is the sure and only result. The rectitude or equity of God's moral administration, is a notion which fully contains and clearly exhibits whatever is alluded to by distinctions as to his justice. His dispensations in chastising or punishing for sin, are simply his equity in reference to his law; his dispensations in allotting men's external condition in the world, are simply his equity in reference to his sovereign good pleasure; and his dispensations in bestowing the blessings of salvation and eternal glory on believers in Jesus, are simply his equity in reference to the substitutionary and redemptional sufferings of Christ. He is just in punishing sin, because he inflicts only what is deserved; he is just in allotting to men various conditions in life, because he bestows on all undeserved kindness, and withholds from none any merited favour; and he is just in delivering believers from the curse and raising them to blessedness, because Christ became a curse in their stead, and has united himself to them as a source of unending life and glory. In all of the dispensations, justice is simply equity, rectitude, doing what is right and holy.—ED.]

[NOTE 2 G. *The Harmony of the Divine Perfections.*—In the preceding paragraph, and in other passages, Dr. Ridgeley uses language respecting the distinguishableness of the divine perfections which is incautious. To say, as he does, that 'the glory of divine patience is as necessary to be displayed as that of any of the other divine perfections,' suggests to the mind a notion that the perfections are distinct not only from Deity but even from one another. Such a notion, it is true, is not intended to be conveyed; yet phraseology which suggests it ought, as carefully as possible, to be avoided. The very phrase, 'harmony of the divine perfections'—so approved, so common, so popular among theologians—ought either to be discarded, or to be carefully defined. In a literal, or in a strictly analogical sense, it is utterly objectionable. What is meant by it is the perfect, the infallible consistency, of the divine actings or modes of manifestation. If, for illustrating this, the various actings or modes of manifestation are compared, we shall find it safe, instead of using a metaphor not sanctioned by scripture, to adopt the beautiful images of the inspired penman: 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.' (Ps. lxxix. 14, 15.) 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven; yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield her increase; righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps.' (Ps. lxxxv. 11—13.) The metaphors employed in these texts possess a significance and an appropriateness which cannot be found in any of man's devising. They appear to allude to the visible and peculiar manifestations of Deity in connexion with the Old Covenant, and particularly to the Shechinah or cloud of the

divine glory in the Holy of Holies. The 'throne' of the Shechinah was over the ark of the covenant, containing the tables of the law, the records of 'justice and judgment.' The oracles of the Urim and Thummim, and the tokens of acceptance of sacrifice and complacency in the people—or 'truth and mercy,'—went forth or forward from the Shechinah toward the priest or congregation who were waiting without. The ministration of sacrifice was upward, from the court of the tabernacle, the symbol of 'the earth,' to the Holiest of all, the symbol of heaven; and both the oracles of the Urim and Thummim and the manifested tokens of accepting sacrifice and blessing the people, were from the Holiest of all toward the outer sanctuary; and thus an emblem was afforded of 'truth springing out of the earth' in our Lord's ministrations on earth, and of righteousness looking down from heaven, in his appearing for his people in the heavenly places to give them repentance and remission of sins, and sending the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth, and perform in them the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power. There is hence, in the metaphors in question, an instructive significance which has no counterpart in such phraseology as that employed by Dr. Ridgeley.—Ed.]

## THE SUPREMACY AND UNITY OF GOD.

QUESTION VIII. *Are there more Gods than one?*

ANSWER, There is but one only, the living and true God.

### *The Supremacy of God.*

In this answer, God is described as the living and true God. Life is the greatest excellency belonging to the nature of any finite being. Some have concluded that the lowest degree of it renders a creature more excellent in itself, than the most glorious creatures that are without it. Intelligent creatures, in the same way, have a superior excellency to all others; because that which gives life to them, or the principle by which, as such, they act, is most excellent. So the life of God is that whereby he infinitely excels all finite beings. When, therefore, he is called the living God, the phrase does not denote one single perfection of the divine nature, but is expressive of all his divine perfections. Accordingly, when God represents himself, in scripture, as giving his people the highest assurance of any thing which he designs to do, and as using the form of an oath, and swearing by his life, 'As I live,' or 'As truly as I live,'<sup>p</sup> the language imports the same thing, as when he says, 'By myself have I sworn.'<sup>q</sup> Hence, when he is called the living God, his glory is set forth as a God of infinite perfection. This, however, has been considered under the last answer.

We may farther observe, that when God is styled the living God, the phrase denotes the display of all his perfections, in connection with life being a principle of action. Hereby he is distinguished from lifeless idols, who were reputed gods by their stupid and profane worshippers. The apostle lays down the terms as antithetic, when he speaks to some, as having 'turned from idols,' or false gods, 'to serve the living and true God.'<sup>r</sup> Here we might consider the origin and progress of idolatry. Men were inclined to 'worship the creature more than the Creator,'<sup>s</sup> or 'to do service to them who by nature are no gods.'<sup>t</sup> Some seemed to have been destitute of common sense, as they were of true religion, when they not only worshipped God by idols of their own making, but prayed to them, and said, 'Deliver us, for ye are our gods.' This the prophet takes notice of;<sup>u</sup> and he exposes their unaccountable stupidity, observing to them that these gods were first growing among the trees of the forest, then cut down with their own hands, and fashioned into their designed form, and part of them cast into the fire, as destined for common uses. These were literally lifeless gods; and their senseless worshippers were but one remove from them: 'They that make them,' says the psalmist, 'are like unto them, and so is every one that trusteth in them.'<sup>x</sup> But this subject we shall have occasion to insist on in a following part of this work,<sup>y</sup> and therefore shall pass it over at present, and consider,

p Isa. xlix. 18, and Numb. xiv. 21.  
q Gal. iv. 8.

u Isa. xlv. 17.

q Gen. xxii. 16.  
x Psal. cxv. 8.

r 1 Thess. i. 9.  
y See Quest. cv.

s Rom. i. 25.

*The Unity of God.*

Scripture is very express in asserting the unity of the Godhead. It is said, 'The Lord our God is one Lord ;'<sup>z</sup> and 'I, even I, am he ; and there is no God with me ;'<sup>a</sup> and 'The Lord, he is God ; there is none else besides him ;'<sup>b</sup> and elsewhere, 'Thou art God alone.'<sup>c</sup> This truth is not founded merely on a few places of scripture which expressly assert it, but may be deduced from every part of it. Yea, it is instanced on the very nature of man, and may be as plainly proved from the light of nature, as that there is a God. Every one of the divine perfections, which were particularly considered under the last answer, will supply us with arguments to confirm our faith in it. But that this may farther appear, let it be considered,

1. That the idea of a God implies, that he is the first cause of all things. In this respect he is opposed to the creature, and existed from all eternity. Now there can be no more than one being, who is without beginning, and who gave being to all other things. This appears from the very nature of the thing ; for if there are more gods, then they must derive their being from him,—and then they are a part of his creation, and consequently not gods, for God and the creature are infinitely opposed to each other. There is but one independent being, who is in and of himself, and derives his perfections from no other ; and therefore there can be but one God.

2. There is but one Being, who is the ultimate end of all things. This necessarily follows from his being their Creator. He that produced them out of nothing, must be supposed to have designed some valuable end by doing so ; and this, ultimately considered, cannot be anything short of himself, for that is inconsistent with the wisdom and sovereignty included in the idea of a Creator. Accordingly, he is said to have 'made all things for himself.'<sup>d</sup> Hence the glory which results from creation is unalienable, and cannot be ascribed to any but himself. To suppose therefore that there are other gods, is to ascribe a divine nature to them, divested of that glory which is essential to it. We may add, that if God is the ultimate end of all things, he is to be glorified as such ; and all worship is to terminate in him : and we must proclaim him to be our chief good and only portion and happiness,—consequences which are plainly inconsistent with a plurality of gods. Besides, he that is the object of adoration must be worshipped, and loved with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind.<sup>e</sup> Our affections must not be divided between him and any other. And since man is under a natural obligation to give supreme worship to him, it follows that there is no other god that has a right to it, and that he is the only true God.

3. Infinitude of perfection being implied in the idea of a God, as has been proved under the last answer, it is certain that it cannot belong to more than one. As it implies that divine perfection is boundless, so it denotes that he sets bounds to the perfections of all others. If, therefore, there are more gods than one, their perfections must be limited ; but that which is not infinite, is not God. And as infinite perfection implies in it all perfection, it cannot be divided among many ; for no being that has only a part of it, could be said to be infinitely perfect. And since there is but one who is so, it follows that there is no other God besides him.

4. Since omnipotence is a divine attribute, there can be but one almighty being, and therefore but one God. This will farther appear, if we consider, that if there were more gods than one, all of them must be said to be able to do all things ; and then the same individual power which is exerted by one, must be exerted by another,—an idea, than which nothing is more absurd. It will also follow, that he who cannot do that which is said to be done by another, is not almighty, or able to do all things, and consequently that he is not God.

5. There is but one being who has an absolute sovereign will,—who, though he can control all others, is himself subject to no control,—who has a natural right to give laws to all who are his subjects, but is subject to none himself ; for absolute

z Deut. vi. 4.

c Psal. lxxvi. 10.

a Chap. xxxii. 39.

d Prov. xvi. 4.

b Chap. iv. 35.

e Luke x. 27.



dominion and subjection are as opposite as light and darkness. Two persons may as well be said to give being to each other, as to have a right to give laws to each other. Moreover, if there were more Gods than one, there would be a confusion in the government of the world; for whatever one decrees, another may reverse; or whatever is done by one, the contrary might be done by the other. This would follow from a sovereignty of will. And as there might be opposite things commanded or forbidden, pursuant to the different wills of a plurality of gods; so the same thing, with respect to those who are under an obligation to yield obedience, would be both a sin and a duty, and the same persons would be both condemned and justified for the same action. [See Note 2 II, page 133.]

6. There is but one being who is, as God is often said to be, the best and the greatest. If there were more Gods than one, either one must be supposed to be more excellent than another, or both equally excellent. If we suppose the former of these, then he who is not the most excellent, is not God; and if the latter, that their excellencies are equal, then infinite perfection would be divided. But this, as was before hinted, is contrary to the idea of infinite perfection: it is contrary also to what is expressly said by God, 'To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.'<sup>d</sup> From these, and several other arguments to the same purpose, which might have been taken from every one of the divine attributes, and from all that essential and relative glory which belongs to him, the unity of the divine essence appears, even to a demonstration. Indeed, to assert that there are more Gods than one, is, in effect, to say that there is no God. So the apostle deems it, when he tells the church at Ephesus that, before their conversion, when they worshipped other Gods, 'they were without God in the world.' This implies as much as that they were 'atheists in the world,' as the words may with propriety be rendered.<sup>e</sup>

Having considered the unity of the Godhead, not only as evinced from scripture, but as it may be demonstrated by the light of nature, it will be necessary that we obviate an objection that may be brought against this latter method of proving it. The objection is, that, if the unity of the Godhead might be known by the dictates of nature, or demonstrated by other arguments besides those which are matter of pure revelation, how comes it to pass that the heathen owned and worshipped a plurality of gods? It was not one particular sect among them that did so; but the abominable practice of polytheism universally obtained where revealed religion was not known. Though, therefore, the unity of God is an undoubted truth, it does not seem to be founded in the light of nature. Now, that the heathen did worship a plurality of gods, is beyond dispute, especially after idolatry had continued a few ages in the world, and so had extinguished those principles of revealed religion which mankind, before this, were favoured with. Yet it must be considered that, though the ignorant and unthinking multitude among them believed everything to be a god which the custom of the countries where they lived had induced them to pay divine adoration to, yet the wiser sort of them, however guilty of idolatry, by paying a kind of lower worship to idols, maintained, notwithstanding, the unity of the Godhead, or that there is one God superior to them all, whom they often called "the Father of gods and men." It was probably to this supreme Deity that the Athenians erected that altar on which the apostle Paul observed this inscription, 'TO THE UNKNOWN GOD;' because he says, in the words immediately following, 'Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.'<sup>f</sup> The heathen sages, however in other instances their conduct seemed to run counter to their method of reasoning, plainly, by their assertions, discover their belief in but one supreme God, who has all the incommunicable perfections of the divine nature. Many of them, in their writings, assert that there is a God, who is the first cause or beginning of all things; that he was from eternity, or in the beginning, and that time took its rise from him; that he is the living God, the fountain of life, and the best of all beings;<sup>g</sup> that he is self-sufficient, and cannot, without absurdity, be supposed to stand in need of, or to be capable of, receiving advantage from any one;<sup>h</sup> that he is the chief

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xl. 25.

<sup>e</sup> Eph. ii. 12. *ἀθεοὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.*

<sup>f</sup> Acts xvii. 23.

<sup>g</sup> See Arist. *Metaphis.* lib. i. cap. 2, and lib. xii. cap. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. *cjusd. Mag. Moral.* lib. ii. cap. 15.

good, or contains in himself whatever is good, and that by him all things consist; and that no one hath enough in himself to secure his own safety and happiness, but must derive these from him.<sup>i</sup> There are others also who plainly assert the unity of God in as strong terms as though they had learned it from divine revelation,—calling him the beginning, the end, and the author of all things, who was before and is above all things, the Lord of all, the fountain of life, light, and all good, yea, goodness itself, the most excellent being,—and giving him many other designations of a similar nature. I could multiply quotations to this effect from Proclus, Porphyry, Iamblicus, Plotinus, Plutarch, Epictetus, and several others; but this has been already done by other hands.<sup>k</sup> From the sayings of these heathens, it appears that, though they mention other gods, they suppose them to be little more than titular or honorary gods, or at best, persons who were the peculiar favourites of God, and admitted to the participation of divine honours, as well as employed in some part of the government of the world. They frequently speak of them as having derived their being from God, whom they call, “the cause of causes, the God of gods.” Some of them speak of God in the singular number, throughout the greatest part of their writings, and only make mention of the gods occasionally; especially when they treat of those works that are worthy of a God, or the greatest honours that are due to him. This is specially the case with Seneca and Plato. The latter, in particular, says,<sup>l</sup> that when he wrote anything in a grave and serious manner, his custom was to preface his epistles with the mention of one God; though, it is true, when he wrote otherwise, he used the common mode of speaking, and talked of other gods. It is observed, that he sometimes, in his writings, uses the phrase, “If it please God,” or, “by the help of God,” not the gods. Notwithstanding what has been said, however, the heathen sages were all idolaters; for they joined in the rites of worship performed to the false gods of their respective countries. Yea, Socrates himself, who fell under the displeasure of the Athenians for asserting the unity of the Godhead, and in consequence lost his life, did not refuse to pay some religious honour to the heathen gods. It is plain that they paid some religious worship to them. Yet this was of an inferior and subordinate nature, not much unlike to that which the papists give to saints and angels. They are far from setting them upon a level with God. They confess they were but men who formerly lived in this world; they give an account of their birth and parentage, and of where they lived and died; they write the history of their lives; they mention what procured them the honour they suppose them after death to have been advanced to,<sup>m</sup>—how some of them attained it as the reward of virtue, or in commemoration of the good they had done to the world in their life,—and some, in consequence of their having been inventors of arts, beneficial to mankind, or conquerors in war, or a public blessing to the country where they lived. Others, especially among the Romans, were deified at the request of their surviving friends. This, after Julius Cæsar’s time, was done by the decree of the senate, who, when they ranked them among the number of their gods, at the same time appointed the rites that should be observed in their worship. And some of the Roman emperors obliged the senate to deify them while they were alive. These things are very largely insisted on by many ancient and modern writers.<sup>n</sup> Upon the whole, therefore, it plainly appears that, whatever they say of a plurality of gods, the wiser sort among the heathen did not deny the unity of the divine essence, in the highest and most proper sense. And as they received the knowledge of this truth from the light of nature, we may conclude that it might be known in that way, as well as by divine revelation. [See Note 2 I, page 133.]

As a practical inference from the doctrine that the object of our worship is the living God, let us feel reproved for that lifeless formality with which many address themselves to him in the performance of religious duties, and for the want of reverence of, and due regard to, the divine perfections which are exhibited in this

i Vid ejusd. De Moribus, lib. ix. cap. 4. and De Mundo, cap. 6.

k Vid. Mornæi de Verit. Relig. Christian. cap. 3.

l Epist. XIII. ad Dionys.

m See Cicero De Natura Deorum.

n See Tertull. Apol. Lactant. de falsa Relig. Arnob. contra Gentes. Minut. Fel. Herodian. Hist. lib. iv. See also Mede’s Apostacy of the Latter Times, chap. 3, 4



character of the Godhead. It is also a very great aggravation, not only of apostasy, but of any degree of backsliding in those who have made a profession of religion, that it is 'a departing from the living God.'<sup>o</sup> Is he the God and giver of life, and shall we forsake him who 'has the words of eternal life,'<sup>p</sup> whose sovereign will has the sole disposal of it? The consideration of his being the living God, likewise renders his judgments most terrible, and his wrath insupportable. 'It is,' as the apostle says, 'a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'<sup>q</sup>

From his being the true God, we infer, that all hypocrisy, both in heart and life, is to be avoided; and that we should draw nigh to him with a true heart and faith unfeigned, and not like those whom the prophet reproves, when he says, 'God was near in their mouth, and far from their reins.'<sup>r</sup> Let us take heed, moreover, that we do not set up any idol in our hearts in opposition to him as the true God. Whatever has a greater share in our affections than God, or is set up in competition with him, is to us a god; and the setting of it up is inconsistent with our paying that regard to him which is due. Accordingly, our Saviour says, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'<sup>s</sup> On this account, 'covetousness' is styled 'idolatry,' because, where it exists, the world is loved more than him. We read also of some 'whose god is their belly,'<sup>u</sup> who 'make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,'<sup>a</sup> as though this was their chief good. And when, in a religious way, we confide in anything below God, or expect that from the creature which is only to be found in him, or when we esteem men as lords of our faith, or when God's sovereignty, or right to govern us, is called in question, and we presumptuously or wilfully rebel against him, we, in effect, dethrone him, or deny that he is the true God. But more of this when we consider the sins forbidden in the first commandment.<sup>x</sup>

From the unity of the Godhead, we may infer that we ought to take heed not to entertain any conceptions of the divine Being which are inconsistent with his unity. As we are not to assert a plurality of gods, so we are not to think or speak of God in such a way as tends to overthrow the simplicity of the divine nature. We must therefore not conceive that it is compounded of various parts, all which, being taken together, constitute the divine essence. This conception, as opposed to a proper idea of the divine unity, gives occasion to that known aphorism, generally laid down by those who treat of this subject, that 'whatever is in God, is God.' This we must reckon one of the incomprehensibles of the divine Being, when we attempt to speak of which, we only give an evident proof of the imperfection of our finite understandings, and of our inability to order our words by reason of darkness. It is necessary, however, when we lay down this proposition, that we define what we intend by it, that so we may not be supposed to use words without ideas. It is necessary, in particular, that we should so define it, as to account, in some measure, for those modes of speaking which, agreeably to scripture, describe God as having a plurality of perfections, and perfections in some respects distinct; and yet, at the same time, that we may not be led to infer a plurality of Gods.

Let it be considered, then, that we have not the least similitude or resemblance of divine unity in any finite being. Every thing below God is composed of parts. In some cases, we call these integral; as the parts of matter, which, when taken together, constitute the whole. In other cases, the parts are called essential; as when we say an intelligent being has various powers or properties. These are essential to it; it would not be complete without every one of them; and they are all distinct. We cannot say that whatever is in the soul of man is the soul; but all its powers or properties, taken together, constitute the man. This, however, is by no means to be affirmed of the divine Being. When we conceive of God as holy, powerful, just, good, &c. we must not suppose that these perfections are so many ingredients in Deity, or that, when taken together, they constitute it, as the whole is constituted of its parts. In that case, each of them would have no other than a partial perfection; and the essential glory of one of them would not be equal to the glory of the Deity, which is supposed to consist of them all. There would,

o Heb. iii. 12.  
s Matt. vi. 24.

p John vi. 68.  
t Col. iii. 5.

q Heb. x. 31.  
u Phil. iii. 19.

r Jer. xii. 2.  
x Quest. cv.



hence, be something in God less than God, or a divine perfection less than all the divine perfections taken together,—which we are not to suppose. Such are the properties of composition ; and when we speak of God as a simple or uncompounded being, we mention them as what are inconsistent with his perfection as such. Neither are the divine perfections distinct or different from one another, as the various parts of which the whole is constituted are said to be distinct. This follows from the former consideration, that the divine essence has no parts. We are not to suppose, then, that the divine attributes, considered as they are in God, are distinguished as one thing or being is from another, or as wisdom, power, justice, mercy, &c. are in men. This would be to suppose the divine being to have several distinct, infinitely perfect beings contained in it,—contrary to its simplicity or unity. Or, were we, on such a supposition, to say that it has unity, it would have it only by participation and dependence : just as a general or complex idea is said to be one which partakes of, and depends on, all those particular or simple ideas that are contained in it, or as one hundred is one, as containing such a number of units as taken together, are equal to a hundred. This is not what we mean when we say God is one. Moreover, when we speak of the divine perfections, as being in God, we suppose them all essential to him, as opposed to what is accidental. An accident is generally described as what belongs, or is superadded, to a being or subject, which might have existed without it, or which might have been destitute of it, and yet sustained no loss of that perfection which is essential to it. Thus wisdom, holiness, justice, faithfulness, are accidents in men ; so that they who have them not, do not cease to be men, or to have the essential perfections of the human nature. But this is by no means to be affirmed of the divine being and attributes ; for to suppose God to be destitute of any of them, is as much as to say that he is not infinitely perfect, or that he is not God. What I have now stated is, I think, the meaning generally intended, by the saying, ‘ Whatever is in God, is God.’ This proposition may be reckoned by some a metaphysical speculation ; and I should for that reason have avoided to mention it, had not an advertence to it been, in some respects, necessary : the unity of God cannot well be conceived of, unless his simplicity be defended ; and I do not see how the latter can be well maintained, if this proposition be not duly considered. If in attempting to explain it, I have used more words than are needful, or repeated the same ideas too often, I have done so to avoid some scholastic modes of speaking, or with a design to render what I said more intelligible. [See Note 2 K, page 134.] We may add, that when, as we often, on the warrant of scripture, do, we speak of the divine perfections as many, or as distinct from one another,—when we speak of the justice of God as different from his mercy, or these from his power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c., we must not be thought to speak inconsistently with what has been said concerning the divine simplicity. The nature and perfections of God, it is to be remembered, are incomprehensible. Hence all the ideas which we have of them, are obtained from our discerning some small resemblance of them in intelligent creatures, and, at the same time, separating from this whatever argues imperfection. It follows that we are supposed not to know, or to be able to describe, what God is in himself, and as I humbly conceive, never shall. Such knowledge as this is too great for any but a divine person. Our conceptions of him, therefore, are taken from, and conformed to, those various methods by which he condescends to make himself visible or known to us, or his acts in reference to objects in which he is said to manifest his perfections. Thus when an effect is produced, we call that perfection that produces it his power ; or when divine acts are distinguished with respect to their particular object or to the manner of their glorifying him, we call the perfections displayed in them his wisdom, justice, goodness, &c. This is what we mean when we speak of various perfections in God. Some, however, suppose that they express themselves more agreeably to the nature of the subject, or to the simplicity of God, by speaking of the divine perfections as denominated from their effects. When, for example, they take occasion to mention the power of God, they call it God acting powerfully ; or of his justice and faithfulness, they, call them, God

acting justly or faithfully.<sup>z</sup> But however we express ourselves, when we speak of the distinct perfections of the divine nature, we mean what is strictly consonant with divine unity and simplicity. Here our thoughts must stop; and what is too great for a finite mind to conceive of, we must make the subject of our admiration; and what we cannot comprehend, we must adore: 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it.'

z See De Vries Exercitat. Rational.

[NOTE 2 H. *Proofs of the Unity of God from Reason.*—All Dr. Ridgeley's proofs of the unity of God from reason, are variations of one proposition,—God is a self-existent, infinite being, and, as such, is necessarily one. The proposition assumes all the points which a polytheist demands to be proved, and gathers all its matter and evidence from revelation. Only a fondness for abstract argumentation, for the claims of what is termed 'natural religion,' or for appearing to establish a great doctrine of theology by the light of reason, could induce any man to parade this proposition as proof of the divine unity, or to exhibit its various phases as separate and independent arguments. Why not rest the unity of God simply on the testimony of revelation,—or on that testimony as directing the mind to corroborative evidence in the uniqueness and sovereign management of divine works? That God is one, is a doctrine which the scriptures teach with remarkable frequency, and in a great variety of forms. While some other doctrines are but incidentally inculcated, or are silently interwoven with the fabric of faith and precept, this is often and carefully taught,—taught in express terms, and in almost all possible connexions. Does not this fact clearly indicate, that reason is not to be trusted for the conservation and defence of the doctrine,—that here, as truly as with respect to the doctrines of redemption, we must sit under the shadow of God's word, and regard it as the sole bulwark of our faith?

Dr. Ridgeley's fifth argument is an instance of how mere reason will sometimes rather injure than serve the cause of one of the simplest points in theology. He states that God has 'an absolute sovereign will,' and is therefore one. To work this proposition into an argument, he supposes two absolute sovereign wills, or two Gods, and hypothetically depicts the effects of their simultaneous operation. An opponent might justly ask, by what imaginable process a man can suppose or fancy consequences or effects, be they what they may, of an impossibility. That which cannot exist cannot act: that which is contrary to all possibility, cannot be imagined. To suppose two absolute sovereign wills, is a hypothesis of the same idle nature as to suppose that a part is greater than a whole. How, then, can consequences or effects of two absolute sovereign wills be supposed? The hypothetical cause being an impossibility, all the supposed effects are, in the idlest sense, conjectural. An opponent might, therefore, assert just the opposite suppositions to Dr. Ridgeley's,—he might assert that two absolute sovereign wills would be in all respects alike,—that they would be the same in infinite excellence, the same in their designs, the same in all their effects; and if he did assert so, he could be rebuked for the temerity of his speculations, only in terms which would equally apply to the hypothetizing of Dr. Ridgeley. The doctrine of the divine unity needs no metaphysical abstractions, no abstruse reasonings, no impossible hypotheses, for its defence; but stands out in luminous glory, intrinsically recommended, and divinely demonstrated, in the testimony of revelation. One sentence of scripture, viewed in connexion with the circumstances in which it was spoken, and the history of the people to whom it was addressed, discloses incomparably higher evidence of it than a whole library of scholastic ratiocination: 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah,' Deut. vi. 4.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 I. *Knowledge of the Unity of God among the Heathen.*—One would think that the universal prevalence of polytheism in regions where the light of written revelation is not enjoyed, is a practical demonstration that the doctrine of the divine unity could never have been discovered or proved by mere reason, or by what is termed 'the light of nature.' Dr. Ridgeley thinks otherwise. But how does he support his hypothesis? First by writing what looks very like an apology for polytheism, and next by assuming that the highest theological notions of the heathen sages were acquired without aid from revelation.

He is obliged to grant that the sages, including even Socrates, were all idolaters; yet he asserts, and labours to prove, that they were not polytheists. Idolatry, it seems, consists in 'worshipping false gods;' while polytheism consists in acknowledging *supreme* gods. How futile a distinction! What matters it whether the object of faith or of adoration,—the object which receives the homage due to Deity, which has ascribed to it the glories peculiar to Jehovah, which attracts the veneration and trust and religious affections of the human heart—what matters it whether this object be an imaginary spirit or a deceased mortal, a fragment of the fancy or a portable and pocketable mass of matter, a hero or a crocodile, the Jupiter or Minerva of the Romans, or the cat or leek of the Egyptians; does not the divine commandment, the first in the decalogue, exactly define and directly denounce it: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me?' Plato's idea of a supreme God subject to fate, was a conception as far distant, in a sense, from the true notion of Deity, as the most grovelling polytheist's idea of the divinity of a stock or a stone. Its quality just as little exempted him from the charge of not knowing the true God, as the quality of the faith of an ancient Egyptian or of a modern Hindoo. All the high titles which he gave it, 'The fountain of life, light, and all good,' 'The cause of causes, and the God of Gods,' only demonstrated, when viewed in their connection, that the idea, besides being false in itself, involved and assumed the notion of a plurality of gods. That all the gods but one were subordinate, was just a demonstration of how resolute, how desperate, the sages were in their polytheism. They knew enough to be convinced that there cannot be two supreme beings; yet rather than want a plurality of gods, or confess the doctrine of



the divine unity, they deified mortals, and worshipped fictions of the mind. Such are the facts with respect to the heathen sages; they are the facts even according to Dr. Ridgeley's own showing; and, if ever facts proved anything, they show to demonstration, that the heathens, viewed as disciples of mere reason, were inveterate and incurable polytheists. Their rejection of the doctrine of the divine will, may have been more moral than intellectual,—more a dictate of the heart or an effort of the will, than a deduction of the understanding; but be it what it might, it was invariable and universal—it characterized alike the sage and the savage—it was co-extensive with the absence of written revelation—and it hence speaks volumes as to the utter inadequacy of the vaunted 'light of nature.'

We have stated, however, but half the case. Dr. Ridgeley assumes—without offering a syllable of proof—that such knowledge as the heathen sages had of a supreme Deity, was obtained without aid from revelation. All history opposes his assumption. Reasons and authorities without number might be adduced to show that, not only by traditions from patriarchal revelation, but by intercommunication with the Jews, if not even by immediate access to the pages of the Old Testament scriptures, the heathen philosophers were indebted to a supernatural origin for all their higher and more refined conceptions. Considering what facilities for information they enjoyed, what streams from remote or proximate revelation flowed across their path, we may feel, not wonder that they entertain some theological views akin to truth, but unmingled astonishment that they entertained so few, and entertained them in so distorted and obscure a manner. The doctrine of the divine unity was promulgated by revelation after revelation to the ages preceding the Mosaic; it was made known to Adam's family before the flood, and to Noah's family after it; it was inculcated by oral communication upon mankind at large, and was afterwards made the foundation and the apex of the fabric of revealed truth set up among the Israelites; it was exhibited in every land through which a Jew travelled, in every house in which he lodged, in every company to which the fame of his religion was carried; it went with the ships and the armies of Solomon 'from the river to the ends of the earth;' it was daily, during seventy years, displayed throughout all the provinces of the Babylonian empire; it was attested in the temple-rites of a numerous colony of Jewish emigrants to Egypt, under the successors of Alexander the Great; and it was maintained, toward the close of the Mosaic era, by communities of Jews in almost every section of the civilized world,—by 'Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and by strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,' Acts ii. 9—11. How, in such circumstances, could the heathen sages, by any possibility, have heard nothing, how could they have heard only a little, how could they otherwise than have heard much and often, from revelation, of the doctrine of the unity of God? But when they heard it, they rejected it; when they were, in a manner, forced to receive it in fact, they divested it of its glory, and associated it with ideas of their own multitudinous deities; when they 'saw' it to demonstration in their understanding, they 'perceived' it not in their hearts; 'when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,' Rom. i. 21—23. What a demonstration is this of the utter futility of the light of nature! If heathens—even the best and wisest of them—universally continued polytheists in spite of indirect though valuable lessons from revelation, how absolutely incompetent were they to discover or defend the doctrine of the divine unity by the efforts of mere reason!—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 K. *The Simplicity of God.*—'The simplicity of God' is not a significant or happy phrase, and is altogether unnecessary. As illustrated by Dr. Ridgeley, it is distinguished partly from the unity of God, and partly from his spirituality. As respects the former, there is really no distinction; and, as respects the latter, the distinction attempted is founded on mistake.

That God is not composed of parts,—that his perfections are not a number of ingredients which taken together constitute a whole,—that they are not accidental,—that his perfections are himself, and he himself is his perfections, are important truths, and ought to be carefully remembered in every contemplation of the divine character. They are truths, however, all embodied in the doctrine that God is one, and fully and correctly expressed in the phrase, 'the unity of God.' To designate them by another phrase, and exhibit them as distinguishable from the doctrine of the divine unity, or as attachable to it in the way of inference, is to produce confusion or error of conception.

Apart from the idea of unity, there is nothing which, with any propriety as to the meaning of words, can be called 'the simplicity of God.' What Dr. Ridgeley says respecting the divine essence not being compounded, as matter or a complex idea is, belongs properly to a view of God's spirituality. But he appears not to be contented with simply the notion of spirituality; and he attempts to show that there is 'a simplicity' in the divine essence which does not exist in created spirits. 'An intelligent being,' he says, 'has various powers or properties which are essential to it, and which'—unlike the divine perfections—'are all distinct. We cannot say that whatever is in the soul of man is the soul; but all its powers or properties taken together constitute the man.' Now, it is true, as he again observes, that 'wisdom, holiness, justice, faithfulness, are accidents in men; so that they who have them not do not cease to be men, or to have the essential perfections of the human nature.' But these properties are *moral*; they belong to man in his relation to the divine law or administration of mercy; they do not—as the attributes of the same name do in God—belong to the essence of his nature; they are only the properties, not the powers, not the essential faculties of man's mind or soul; they constitute, not his intellectuality, not his spirituality, but simply his moral character,—the aggregate of influences and motives and principles which determine his conduct as a subject of the divine government. But what shall be said of his knowing and reflecting powers,—of his perception, his consciousness, his memory, his judgment? Are these



'parts,' or 'ingredients,' or 'accidents?' Are they distinct from the intellect, or apart from one another? Or is not perception the entire mind receiving an idea from without, consciousness the entire mind receiving an idea from within, memory the entire mind recalling an idea, and judgment the entire mind comparing one idea with another? The very undividedness of the intellect, its uniqueness, its identity with what are called its powers or faculties, is what we denominate its spirituality, and what is distinguishable in it from a substance which consists of ingredients or parts. To speak of simplicity as something different from spirituality, and, at the same time, inferrible from unity, is, therefore, to speak without warrant, and to occasion confusion or error. That God is one, and that God is a spirit, are the only propositions respecting the indivisibility or oneness of the divine essence, which scripture contains or sanctions. To frame another, and talk of 'the simplicity of God,' is only to adopt one of those unmeaning scholastic distinctions which bewilder and mystify the understanding, and obscure or distort a facile and elementary truth.—Ed.]

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

QUESTION IX. *How many Persons are there in the Godhead?*

ANSWER. There be three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.

QUESTION X. *What are the personal properties of the three Persons in the Godhead?*

ANSWER. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

QUESTION XI. *How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?*

ANSWER. The scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father; ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

In these three answers is contained the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. This is a subject of pure revelation. As it is much contested in the age in which we live, we are obliged to be copious and particular in laying down the reasons of our belief of it, and in our defence of it against those that deny it. It is a doctrine that has been defended by some of the most judicious writers, both in our own and in other nations. Some of these have proved that it was maintained by the church in the purest ages; and their having done so renders it less necessary for us to enter into the historical part of the controversy. We shall discuss the doctrine, principally, as founded on the sacred writings. And while others, by confining themselves to the scholastic methods of speaking, have rendered some parts of it obscure, we shall endeavour to avoid these, that so it may be better understood by private Christians. As to the method of treating it, we shall, first, premise some things which are necessary to be considered, with relation to it in general. Secondly, we shall consider in what sense we are to understand the words 'Trinity' and 'Persons in the Godhead,' and in what respect the divine persons are said to be One. Thirdly, we shall prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have distinct personal properties, and therefore that we have sufficient reason to call them Persons in the Godhead, as they are called in the first of these answers. Under this head, we shall consider also what is generally understood by the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost; and what cautions we are to use, lest, by mistaking the sense of what is said on these subjects, we be led into any error, derogatory to, or subversive of, the doctrine of the Trinity. We shall likewise endeavour to explain those scriptures which are generally brought to establish these doctrines. Lastly, we shall endeavour to prove that the three Persons in the Godhead, especially the Son and the Holy Ghost, are truly divine, or that they have all the perfections of the divine nature; and therefore that they are, in the most proper sense, the one only living and true God.

### *The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

The first thing which we premise, as necessary to be considered, with relation to the doctrine of the Trinity in general, is that this doctrine is of the highest

importance, and is necessary to be believed by all Christians who pay a just deference to revealed religion. It may probably be reckoned an error in method to speak of the importance of the doctrine, before we attempt to prove its truth. Our doing so, however, is not altogether unjustifiable; since we not only address ourselves to those who deny it, but also aim to produce some farther conviction or establishment in the faith of it, in those who believe it. We may therefore be allowed to consider it as an important doctrine; in order that we may be excited to a more diligent inquiry into the force of some of those arguments which are generally brought in its defence.

Now to determine a doctrine to be of the highest importance, we must consider the belief of it as subservient to that true religion which is ordained by God, as connected with salvation, or as a means leading to it, without which we have no warrant to expect it. Such doctrines are sometimes called fundamental, as being the basis and foundation on which our hope is built. It will, I think, be allowed, by all whose sentiments do not savour of scepticism, that there are some doctrines of religion necessary to be believed to salvation. There are some persons, it is true, who plead for the innocency of error; or who contend for this, at least, in the case of sincere inquirers after truth, who, in the end, will appear to have been very remote from it,—as though their endeavours would entitle them to salvation, without the knowledge of those things which others conclude to be necessarily subservient to it. All that we shall say on this point, is, that it is not the sincerity of our inquiries after important truths, but the success of them, which is to be regarded as a means of obtaining so valuable an end. We may as well suppose that our sincere endeavours to obtain many of those graces which accompany salvation, such as faith, love to God, and evangelical obedience, will supply, or atone for, the want of them, as assert, that our unsuccessful inquiries after the great doctrines of religion, will excuse our ignorance of them. This especially appears when we consider, that blindness of mind, as well as hardness of heart, is included among those spiritual judgments which are the consequence of our fallen state; and that God displays the sovereignty of his grace, as much in leading the soul into all necessary truth, as in any other things that relate to salvation. It is not our business, however, to determine the final state of men; or how far they make advances to, or recede from, the knowledge of the most important doctrines; or what will be the issue of their comparative acquaintance with them. Our business is rather to desire of God, that so far as we or others are destitute of a knowledge of fundamental doctrines, he would grant us and them ‘repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.’<sup>a</sup> Here we cannot but observe, that the question relating to important or fundamental articles of faith, is not, Whether any doctrines may be so called? but, What those doctrines are? In determining this, many make provision for their own particular scheme of doctrines. Some, particularly the Papists, assert several doctrines to be fundamental, without scripture warrant; yea, they assert some to be so which are directly contrary. Others allow no doctrine to be fundamental, but what will, if adhered to, open a door of salvation to all mankind; and these set aside the necessity of divine revelation. Others, who desire not to run such lengths, will allow that some scripture-doctrines are necessary to be believed to salvation; but they allow only those to be such which are maintained by persons who are in their way of thinking. Accordingly, they who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, are obliged, in conformity to their own sentiments, to deny also that it is an important article of faith. These may justly demand a convincing proof of the truth of it, before they believe it to be of any importance, especially to themselves. It would be a vain thing to tell them, that the belief of it is connected with salvation, or is as necessary as divine worship is, which supposes the belief of the divinity of the Persons whom we adore,—it would be vain to tell them this, without first proving that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are divine Persons. It would be as little to their edification to say that there are several doctrines necessary to be believed;—such as that of Christ’s satisfaction, and of our justification depending on it, and that of regeneration and



sanctification, as the effects of the divine power of the Holy Ghost,—all of which suppose the belief of Christ and the Holy Ghost being divine Persons. We must first give some convincing proof of the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, with which these doctrines are supposed to stand or fall ; else it would be immediately replied, that the one is false, and far from being of any importance, and that therefore so are the others. But as we reserve the consideration of these doctrines to their proper place, we shall only observe at present, that there are some persons who do appear to deny not the doctrine of the Trinity, but rather the importance of it, and express themselves with very great indifference about it, and blame all attempts to defend it as needless or litigious, as though they were only a contest about words. They say, ‘ Though we hold it ourselves, others who deny it may have as much to say in defence of their own cause as we have, and therefore these disputes ought to be wholly laid aside.’ Now, as regards these persons, what we have hinted concerning the importance of this doctrine may not be altogether misapplied. We have taken occasion, therefore, to mention it in this place, that we may not be supposed to plead a cause which is not worth defending ; and that the doctrine of the Trinity may appear to be, not an empty speculation, but a doctrine which we are bound to esteem as of the highest importance.

Let us next consider what degree of knowledge of this doctrine is necessary to, or connected with, salvation. It cannot be supposed that such a degree of knowledge includes every thing that is commonly laid down in those writings in which the doctrine is attempted to be explained ; for when we speak of it as a doctrine of the highest importance, we mean by it the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity. This is what we are to assent to, and to use our utmost endeavours to defend. As for those explications which are merely human, they are not to be reckoned of equal importance. Every private Christian, in particular, is not to be censured as a stranger to this doctrine, who cannot define personality in a scholastic way, or understand all the terms used in explaining it, or several modes of speaking which some writers tenaciously adhere to,—such as ‘ hypostasis,’ ‘ subsistence,’ ‘ consubstantiality,’ ‘ the modal distinction of the Persons in the Godhead,’ ‘ filiation,’ ‘ the communication of the divine essence by generation,’ ‘ the communication of it by procession.’ Some of those expressions rather embarrass the minds of men, than add any farther light to the sense of those scriptures in which this doctrine is taught. When we consider how far the doctrine of the Trinity is to be known and believed to salvation, we must not exclude the weakest Christian from a possibility of knowing it, by supposing it necessary for him to understand some hard words, which he doth not find in his Bible, and which, if he meet them elsewhere, will not add much to his edification. That knowledge which is necessary to salvation, is plain and easy, and is to be found in every part of scripture. Accordingly, every Christian knows, that the word ‘ God ’ signifies a Being that has all those divine perfections which are so frequently attributed to him in scripture, and are displayed and glorified in all his works of common providence and grace. Every Christian knows also that this God is one ; and he learns from his Bible, and therefore firmly believes, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are possessed of divine perfections, and consequently are this one God. He knows, further, that, in scripture, they are distinguished by such characters and properties as are generally called ‘ personal ;’ and he applies the word ‘ Person ’ to each of them, and concludes that the divine glory attributed to them is the same, though their personal properties or characters are distinct. This is the substance of what is contained in the first of the Answers at present under consideration. And he who believes this, needs not entertain any doubt that he wants some ideas of this sacred doctrine which are necessary to salvation ; for the degree of knowledge, which he possesses, attended with a firm belief, is sufficient to warrant all those acts of divine worship which we are bound to render to the Father, Son, and Spirit, and is consistent with all those other doctrines, which are founded on that of the Trinity, or which suppose the belief of it.



*The Doctrine of the Trinity a Mystery.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is a great mystery, such as cannot be comprehended by a finite mind. But let us inquire what we are to understand by the word 'mystery,' as it is used in scripture. This word sometimes denotes a doctrine's having been kept secret, or, at least, revealed more obscurely than afterwards, so that it was not so clearly known. In this sense the gospel is called, 'The mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.'<sup>b</sup> It was covered with the ceremonial law, as with a vail, which many of the people, through the blindness of their minds, did not fully understand. Accordingly, when persons are led into a farther knowledge of it, it is said, as our Saviour tells his disciples, that to them it is given to 'know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.'<sup>c</sup>—Again, when something is revealed in scripture which the world was not in the least apprized of before, it is, by way of eminence, called 'a mystery.' The apostle, speaking concerning the change that shall take place on those that shall be found alive at the last day, says, 'Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.'<sup>d</sup>—There is still another idea affixed to the word 'mystery,' namely, that though a doctrine be revealed, it cannot be fully comprehended. It is in this sense that we call the doctrine of the Trinity a mystery. The word, in some scriptures, seems to occur in two of its senses. When the apostle says, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God,'<sup>e</sup> he speaks of the gospel, not only 'as hid,' but as 'unsearchable;' and when he speaks of 'the mystery of God, even the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,'<sup>f</sup> the word 'mystery' seems to denote that which had not been fully made known, and that which cannot be fully understood. Few will deny that the glory of the Father, who is here spoken of, as well as Christ, is incomprehensible by a finite mind; and if it be said that the gospel is intended, and that the words ought to be rendered, 'in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' even this must be supposed to be incomprehensible, as well as formerly less known, otherwise the character which the apostle gives of it would be too great.

But suppose the word 'mystery' were always used to signify a doctrine not before revealed, without including the idea of its being incomprehensible, our general position would not be overthrown; for we can prove from other arguments that the doctrine of the Trinity is incomprehensible; and this we shall endeavour to do. That we may prepare our way for this, let it be considered, that there are some finite things not incomprehensible in themselves, which we cannot now comprehend by reason of the imperfection of our present state. How little do we know of some things which may be called mysteries in nature,—such as the reason of the growth and various colours and shapes of plants, and the various instincts of brute creatures! Yea, how little do we know comparatively of ourselves! How little of the nature of our souls, otherwise than as it is observed by their actions, and by the effects they produce,—or of the reason of their union with our bodies, or of their acting by them! As the inspired writer observes, 'Thou knowest not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all things.'<sup>g</sup> Elihu, mentioning some wonderful works of nature, which he challenges Job to give an account of, speaks of this in particular, 'Dost thou know how thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth, by the south wind?'<sup>h</sup> These words signify, not only that we cannot account for the winds producing heat or cold, as blowing from various quarters of heaven, but that we know not the reason of the vital heat which is preserved, for so many

<sup>b</sup> Coloss. i. 26.  
<sup>g</sup> Eccles. xi. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xiii. 11.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

<sup>e</sup> Eph. iii. 8, 9

<sup>f</sup> Coloss. ii. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Job xxxvii. 17, &c.

years, in the bodies of men, the inseparable concomitant and sign of life, or what gives the first motion to the blood and spirits, or fits the organized body to perform its various functions. These things cannot be comprehended by us.

But when we speak of that which is infinite, we must conclude it to be incomprehensible, not only because of the imperfection of our present state, but because, as has been before observed,<sup>h</sup> of the infinite disproportion that there is between the object and our finite capacities. In this respect, we showed that the perfections of the divine nature cannot be comprehended,—such as the immensity, eternity, omnipresence, and simplicity of God. Yet we are to believe that he is infinitely perfect. Now it seems equally reasonable to suppose the doctrine of the Trinity to be incomprehensible; for the mutual relation of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and their distinct personality, are not the result of the divine will—they are personal perfections, and are therefore necessary, and their glory, as well as that of his essential perfections, infinite. If we are bound to believe one to be incomprehensible, why should we not as well suppose the other to be so? Or if there are some things which the light of nature gives us some ideas of, concerning which we, notwithstanding, know but little, why should it be thought strange, that the doctrine of the Trinity, though the subject of pure revelation, should be equally incomprehensible! This inference appears so evident, that some who deny the doctrine of the Trinity to be incomprehensible, do not hesitate to deny the perfections of the divine nature to be so. They maintain that there is nothing which is the object of faith but what may be comprehended by us; and thus go to extremities in defence of their cause, which no one who hath the least degree of the humility becoming a finite creature, should venture to adopt. They even, as their cause seems to require, proceed as far as to say, that every doctrine which we cannot comprehend is to be rejected by us; as though our understandings were to set bounds to the truth and credibility of all things.

This, I think, is the true state of the question about mysteries in Christianity. The question is not, whether the word ‘mystery’ is never used in scripture to signify what is incomprehensible; for if that could be sufficiently proved, which I think hath not yet been done, we would assert the doctrine of the Trinity to be more than a mystery, namely, an incomprehensible doctrine. And the proof of this seems absolutely necessary; for the Anti-trinitarians—some of them, with an air of insult—conclude that our asserting it is a last resort, which we betake ourselves to when they have beaten us out of all our other strongholds. We might suppose, therefore, that the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of the Trinity would be opposed with the greatest warmth; but I do not find that it has hitherto been overthrown. Indeed, when they call it one of our most plausible pretences, as though we laid the whole stress of the controversy upon it, we might expect that it should be attacked with stronger arguments than it generally is. Sometimes they bend their force principally against the sense of the word ‘mystery:’ and here they talk not only with an air of insult, but with profaneness, when they compare the doctrine with the abominable mysteries of the heathen, which were not to be divulged to any but those who were in the secret, or when they compare it with transubstantiation, and reckon it mysterious in the same sense, or, according to their construction, absurd and nonsensical. This way of arguing has so far prevailed among them, that no one must apply the word ‘mystery’ to any doctrines of religion without exposing himself to scorn and ridicule. This, however, will do no service to their cause, nor prejudice to our doctrine, in the opinion of those who inquire into the latter with that seriousness and impartiality which the importance of the doctrine calls for.

The question, then, is, whether any doctrines of religion may be deemed incomprehensible,—that is, such as we can have no adequate ideas of, because of the disproportion between them and our finite minds? and whether the incommunicable perfections of God are not to be reckoned among these incomprehensible doctrines? If they are not, it will be reasonable to demand that every thing relating to them be particularly accounted for, and reduced to the standard of a finite capacity. If

<sup>h</sup> See Quest. vii. Sect. ‘The Incomprehensibility of God.’

this cannot be done, but some things must be allowed to be incomprehensible in religion, it will be farther inquired, Why should the doctrine of the Trinity be rejected, because we cannot account for every thing that relates to the personal glory of God, any more than we can for those things that respect his essential glory? Or may not some things that are matter of pure revelation, be supposed to exceed our capacities, and yet we be bound to believe them, as well as other things which by the light of nature appear to be true, and, at the same time, are incomprehensible? But that we may enter a little more particularly into this argument, we shall consider the most material objections that are brought against it, and what may be replied to them.

One objection is, that we take up with the mere sound of words, and do not affix any manner of ideas to them. Now there is no Christian, that I know of, who thinks there is any religion in the sound of words, or that it is sufficient for us to take up with the word 'Trinity,' or 'Persons in the Godhead,' without determining, in some measure, what we understand by it. We allow that faith supposes some ideas of the object,—that is, that we have some knowledge of what we believe it to be. But our knowledge of things admits of various degrees. Of some things we know only that they are what they are determined or proved to be. If we proceed farther in our inquiries, and would know how every matter is to be accounted for which may justly be affirmed concerning them, our ideas are at a stand. Yet our being reduced to this state is not in the least inconsistent with our believing what we conclude them to be. We believe, for example, that God's eternity is without succession, or that his immensity is without extension. This we know and believe, because to assert the contrary would be to ascribe imperfection to him. Our faith, as grounded on this reason of it, extends only as far as our ideas; and as regards what exceeds them, we are bound to believe that there is something in God which is beyond the reach of a finite mind, though, in consequence of its being infinite, we cannot comprehend or fully describe it. So with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, it is one thing to say that the Father, Son, and Spirit, have the perfections of the divine nature, as well as distinct personal characters and properties, attributed to them in scripture, and that because the Godhead is but one, these three are one,—it is one thing to say this, and firmly to believe it, on the ground of its being clearly revealed in scripture; and another thing to say that, though we cannot fully describe all the properties of their divine personality, we, nevertheless, believe that they subsist in an incomprehensible manner. And while we compare them with finite persons, as we do the perfections of God with those of the creature, we separate from the one, as well as from the other, whatever savours of imperfection.

Another objection is, that it is unbecoming the divine wisdom and goodness to suppose that God should give a revelation, and demand our belief of it, as necessary to salvation, when, at the same time, it is impossible for our understandings to yield an assent to it, since nothing that is unintelligible can be the object of faith. Now, we must distinguish between rendering unintelligible, by perplexity or difficulty of style, a doctrine which would otherwise be easy to be understood, and the imparting of a doctrine which none can comprehend. The former of these cannot be charged on any part of scripture; and it is only a revelation liable to be charged with it which could be reckoned inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God. As to the latter, the design of revelation is not to make us comprehend what is in itself incomprehensible. God, for instance, did not design, when he made known his perfections in his word, to give us such a perfect discovery of himself, that we might be said by means of it to find him out unto perfection, or that we should know as much of his glory as is possible to be known, or as much as he knows of it himself; for that is to suppose the understanding of man infinitely more perfect than it is. Whatever is received, is received in proportion to the measure of that which contains it. The whole ocean can communicate no more water than what will fill the vessel which is applied to receive it. Accordingly, the infinite perfections of God being such as cannot be contained in a finite mind, we are not to suppose that our comprehending them was the design of divine revelation. God, indeed, designed that we should apprehend some things of himself, or as much as



should be subservient to the great ends of religion, but not so much as might be inconsistent with our humbly confessing that 'we are but of yesterday, and know,' comparatively, 'nothing.'<sup>i</sup> And this is true as regards not only the essential, but the personal glory of God, 'Who hath ascended into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?'<sup>k</sup> Our Saviour, indeed, speaks of his having 'ascended into heaven,'<sup>l</sup> as having a comprehensive knowledge of all divine truths; but this he affirms concerning himself as a divine person, exclusively of all creatures. As to the objection stating, that God makes the comprehensive knowledge of mysterious doctrines a term of salvation, we must take leave to deny it. We have already considered what degree of knowledge is necessary to salvation, and have shown it to be such as is subservient to religion,—which teaches us to adore what we apprehend to be its object, though we cannot comprehend it. As to the further allegation in the objection, that that which is unintelligible, is not the object of faith, we must distinguish before we grant or deny it. As the object of faith is some proposition laid down, it is one thing to say that a proposition cannot be assented to, when we have no ideas of what is affirmed or denied in it; and another thing to say that it is not to be believed, when we have ideas of several things contained in it, of which some are affirmed, and others denied. When, for instance, we say that God is an infinite Spirit, there is a positive idea contained in the proposition, or there is something affirmed in it, namely, that he is able to put forth actions suitable to an intelligent being; there is also something denied concerning him, namely, that he is corporeal, and that there are any limits to his understanding. Now, all this we may truly be said to understand and believe. But if we proceed farther, and inquire what it is to have such an understanding or will, not only does the question exceed our comprehension, but it is not a proposition, and consequently not the object of faith. The same principle holds with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. When we affirm that there is one God, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, have all the perfections of the Godhead, and that these perfections, and the personality of each of them, are infinitely greater than what can be found in the creature, we state what we yield our assent to. But if it be inquired how far God herein exceeds all the ideas which we have of finite perfections, or personality, our understandings are at a loss. So far, however, as this does not contain the form of a proposition, it cannot, according to our common acceptance of the word, be said to be the object of faith.

A third objection is, that practical religion is designed to be promoted in the world by a revelation; and therefore the will of man must follow the dictates of the understanding, and not blindly embrace, and be conversant about, we know not what,—which is to act unbecoming our character as intelligent creatures. Now, the ideas which we have of things subservient to practical religion are of two sorts, such as engage our obedience, or such as excite our adoration and admiration. As to the former, we know what we are commanded to do, what it is to act as becomes those who are subject to a divine person, though we cannot comprehend those infinite perfections which lay us under the highest obligations to obey him. As to the latter, the incomprehensibleness of the divine personality, or perfections, has a direct tendency to excite our admiration, and the infinitude of them our adoration. And since all religion may be reduced to these two heads, the contents of divine revelation, so far from being inconsistent with it, tend to promote it. Things commanded are not, as such, incomprehensible, as was but now observed, and therefore not inconsistent with that obedience or subjection which is enjoined in one branch of revelation; and things incomprehensible do not contain the form of a command, but rather excite our admiration, and therefore are not only consistent with, but adapted to promote, the other branch of it. Is it not an instance of religion to adore and magnify God, when we behold the display of his perfections in his works? And is he less to be adored, or admired, because we cannot comprehend them? Or should we not rather look upon them with a greater degree of

<sup>i</sup> Job viii. 9.<sup>k</sup> Prov. xxx. 4.<sup>l</sup> John iii. 13.

astonishment, than if they did not exceed the reach of a finite mind? Must a person be able to measure the water of the ocean, or number all the particles of matter that are contained in the world, before his ideas can be in any way directed to show forth the Creator's praise? Or must we be able to account for every thing that is a mystery in nature, before we can improve it to promote some of the ends of practical religion to which it incites us? May we not say, with wonder, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches?'<sup>m</sup> So when we behold the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as displayed in the work of redemption, or as revealed in scripture, which, as exhibiting it, is said to be an instance of his 'manifold wisdom,'<sup>n</sup> should we not admire it the more that it is, as the apostle calls it, 'unsearchable?' We conclude, therefore, that practical religion, as founded on divine revelation, is not, in any of its branches, inconsistent with the incomprehensibleness of those things which are, some in one respect, and others in another, its objects. As to what the objection further states concerning the will following the dictates of the understanding, and practical religion being seated in the latter, I own that we must first know what we are to do in matters of religion, before we can act. Thus we must first know what it is to worship, love, and obey the Father, Son, and Spirit, and also that these three divine persons are the object of worship, love, and obedience; and then the will follows the dictates of the understanding. But it is one thing to know these things, and another thing to be able to comprehend the divine, essential, or personal glory which belongs to them, and is the foundation of acts of religious worship.

Another objection is, that the design of divine revelation is to improve our understandings, and render our ideas of things more clear, and not to entangle and perplex them; or, as it is sometimes expressed, that revelation is an improvement upon the light of nature. This objection seems to have a double aspect, or tendency to advance, or to depreciate, divine revelation. If we take it in the former view, we freely own that revelation is a very great improvement upon the light of nature. It is so, as it leads us into the knowledge of many things which could not be discovered by the light of nature,—such as the doctrine of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, and of that infinite satisfaction which was given by him to the justice of God in order to our discharge from condemnation; and also as it leads us into that communion which believers have with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Since the light of nature gives us no discovery of these doctrines, divine revelation, and particularly the gospel, makes a very great addition to our ideas. Both, it is true, take their rise from God; yet one excels the other as much as the light of the sun does that of a star. The psalmist, when comparing them, says respecting revelation, 'It is perfect, converting the soul,' and 'sure, making wise the simple.'<sup>o</sup> Again, when the same truths are discovered by the light of nature, and by divine revelation, the latter tends very much to improve our ideas. Thus when the light of nature leads us into the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, his wisdom, power, and goodness, as illustrated in the works of creation and providence, we have not so clear ideas of them, as we receive from the additional discoveries of them in divine revelation. Hence, the one does not cloud or darken those ideas which the other gives. But those who bring the objection against the doctrine of the Trinity, intend by it to *depreciate* divine revelation; and the sense of their objection is,—that though the light of nature leads mankind into such a degree of the knowledge of divine truths as is sufficient, in its kind, to salvation, so that they who are destitute of divine revelation may understand the terms of acceptance with God, and the way which, if duly improved, would lead to heaven; yet God was pleased to give some farther discovery of the same things by his word, which, in consequence, is only an improvement upon the other, as it makes the same truths which were known in some degree without it, more clear, and frees them from those corruptions or false glosses which the perverse reasonings of men have set upon them; whereas we, by insisting on inexplicable mysteries, which we pretend to be founded on divine revelation, though in

reality they are not contained in it, cloud and darken the light of nature, and so make the way of salvation more difficult than it would otherwise be. This objection, however plausible the words, at first view, may appear to be, certainly tends to depreciate divine revelation. It supposes those doctrines now mentioned, and many others of a similar nature, not necessary to salvation. It, therefore, takes its rise from the Deists, however it may be applied by the Anti-trinitarians, in militating against the doctrine of the Trinity. And as the principal design of it is to overthrow this doctrine, by supposing it to be unintelligible, and, according to their method of reasoning, in no sense the object of faith, the only reply which need be made to it is, that the discoveries of the glory of God by the light of nature, are, in some respects, as incomprehensible as the doctrine of the Trinity, while we are not, for that reason, obliged to disbelieve or reject them. No advantage, therefore, is gained against our argument, by supposing that the light of nature contains a discovery of truths, plain, easy, and intelligible, and that the doctrine of the Trinity is otherwise, and, as such, is not contained in divine revelation, and cannot be defended.

*The Doctrine of the Trinity not contrary to reason.*

Another thing that may be premised, before we enter on the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, is, that that doctrine is not contrary to reason, though it be above it, and that our reasoning powers, when directed by scripture-revelation, are not altogether useless, in order to our attaining such a degree of the knowledge of it as is necessary, and ought to be diligently sought. When a doctrine may be said to be above reason, has been already considered, as well as that the doctrine of the Trinity is so. We are now, then, to obviate the most popular objection brought against that doctrine, namely, that it is absurd and irrational, and that they who maintain it must lay aside their reason before they can be induced to believe it; for it assumes either that three are equal to one, which is contrary to the common sense of mankind, or that there is a plurality of gods, which is contrary to the first principles of the light of nature. Here we are reflected on, as though we demanded that our antagonists should lay aside their reason before we argue with them, and so make it easy to be seen on which side the argument will preponderate. To make way, then, for what may be said in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall in this section, First, consider when a doctrine may be said to be contrary to reason; Secondly, show that the doctrine of the Trinity is not so; and Thirdly, inquire what is the use of reason in establishing it, or any other doctrines which are the subject of pure revelation.

1. First, then, let us inquire when we may conclude that a doctrine is contrary to reason. A doctrine may, in a sense, be said to be contrary to reason, when it is contrary to the methods of reasoning made use of by particular persons, which are not always just; and it may then not be false or absurd, but rather the contrary. It is nothing, therefore, to our present argument, to be asked, with an air of boasting, by those on the other side of the question, that if the doctrine we are maintaining could have been accounted for, how comes it to pass that so many men of sense and learning, as are to be found among the Anti-trinitarians, have not been able to do it? We suppose a doctrine to be contrary to reason, only when it contradicts some of the first principles which the mind of man cannot but yield its assent to,—which it receives as soon as it takes in the sense of the words expressing them, without demanding any proof. Examples of such principles are, that the whole is greater than a part,—that a thing cannot be, and not be, at the same time,—and that two is more than one. Or a doctrine is contrary to reason which, when any point is proved to be true to a demonstration, is contained in a proposition contradictory to it, in which the words are taken in the same sense.

2. We shall now show that the doctrine of the Trinity is not contrary to reason. That this may appear, it is to be remarked that we do not say that the three Persons in the Godhead are one Person, or that the one divine Being is three divine Beings.

It is objected, however, that as reason establishes and proves the unity of the



Godhead, it is contrary to it to say that the divine nature may be predicated of more than one ; for, in that case, there is a plurality of Gods, and every distinct Person must be a distinct God. In other words, it is alleged that the Trinitarian doctrine is downright Tritheism, and consequently contrary to reason. Here those words of the Athanasian Creed are produced as an instance : “ The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God ; so that the Father is Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal, yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal ; and the Father Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty, yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.” These words they suppose, though without ground, to contain a plain contradiction. When we say the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are God, we do not say they are distinct Gods ; for the distinction between them respects their personality, not their deity. When, again, we assert that they are all Eternal, or Almighty, we do not suppose that their duration or power are distinct. And the same thing may be said of all other divine perfections that are attributed to them : the perfections are the same in all of them, though the persons are distinct. The charge of Tritheism thus lies in a narrow compass. The Anti-trinitarians say that there is one divine Being ; so do we. But they add, that this divine Being is a divine person, since existence and personality are the same, and that if there be more divine Persons, there must be more Gods. This they maintain ; and this we deny. Now how do they prove it ? The proof amounts to no more than this,—that there is no instance in finite things—among angels or men, to whom alone personality can be applied—of any distinct persons who are not, at the same time, distinct beings. From this it is inferred that the case must be the same with respect to the divine Persons. This inference we are bound to deny. Our ideas of personality and of existence are not the same. How inseparable soever these may be in what respects creatures, we may have distinct ideas of them, when we speak of the divine being and personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Here it will, doubtless, be demanded, that we determine wherein the difference consists ; or, in particular, since every distinct finite Person is a distinct being, what there is in the divine personality that should exclude the Father, Son, and Spirit, from being distinct beings, because distinct Persons. Must we then, when we conclude that there is a small or faint resemblance between divine and human personality, be able to comprehend, and fully to describe, that infinite disproportion which is between them, or else be charged with using words without any manner of ideas annexed to them, and so let our cause fall to the ground ? If, indeed, the divine personality were finite, like that of the creature, it might be required that a finite mind should account for it ; but since it is not so, but incomprehensible, we are bound to believe what we cannot comprehend.

But have we no ideas at all of the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit ? To this we may answer, that we have finite ideas of it, and that only such ideas have we of any of the divine perfections. We are taught, by scripture, to say that they are distinct Persons. We also know what those personal characters or properties, whence our ideas take their rise, signify, when affirmed of men. At the same time, we in our thoughts abstract every thing from these characters or properties which argues imperfection. In short, in our conceptions of them we proceed in the same way, as when we think of any of the perfections of the divine nature. These, as well as the divine personality, are incomprehensible. Yet, while we say they are infinitely more than can be in any creature, we, notwithstanding, retain such ideas of them as tend to answer those ends of religion which suppose that we apprehend something of them which is conducive to its exercise.

3. We are now to consider the use of reason in proving or defending the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other doctrines of pure revelation. Though these doctrines could not have been discovered by reason, nor can every thing that is revealed be comprehended by it ; yet reason is not to be laid aside as useless, and has been called by some a servant to faith. While revelation discovers what doctrines we are to believe, and demands our assent to them, reason offers a convincing proof that we are under an indispensable obligation to give it—it proves the doctrine to be true and such as is worthy of God, as it is derived from him, the fountain of truth and

wisdom. This office of reason, or the subserviency of it to our faith, is certainly necessary ; for what is false cannot be the object of faith in general, and nothing unworthy of God can be the matter of divine revelation or the object of a divine faith.

Now, in order to reason's judging of the truth of things, it first considers the sense of words, what ideas are designed to be conveyed by them, and whether these are contrary to the common sense of mankind. It then proceeds to inquire into those evidences that may give conviction, and enforce our belief of the ideas, and leads us into the nature of the truths revealed, receives them as stamped with the authority of God, and considers them as agreeable to his perfections. It also leads us into his design in revealing them, and what we are to infer from them ; and in doing this, it connects things together, shows their importance, and observes the dependence of one upon another, and how they are to be improved to answer the best purposes. Now this office of reason may be performed in particular with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. That doctrine, as has been already proved, contains in it no absurdity contradictory to reason ; and the evidences on which our faith in it is founded, will be farther considered when, by the express words of scripture, or by just consequences deduced from them, we prove it to be a doctrine of revelation, agreeable to the mind of the Holy Ghost. The proofs which we shall then adduce will make it farther appear, that it is necessary for us to use our reason in stating those doctrines which neither are founded on it, nor can be comprehended by it.

*Whence the Doctrine of the Trinity is to be deduced.*

We shall now consider whence the doctrine of the Trinity is to be deduced, or where we are to search for that knowledge of it in which we are to acquiesce. Here it must be observed, that it cannot be learnt from the light of nature ; for then we should certainly be able to behold some traces of it in the works of creation and providence, and, reasoning from the effect to the cause, should understand it from them, as well as the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. We should never have known that God made all things by his essential word, 'without whom,' as the evangelist says,<sup>p</sup> 'was not anything made that was made,' had we not been told so by divine revelation. In like manner we should never have known that the Spirit, as a distinct Person from the Father, created all things, and performed several other works by which his personal glory is demonstrated, had we not been instructed on the subject by scripture. The light of nature could discover to us, indeed, that God, who is a Spirit, or an incorporeal Being, has produced many effects worthy of himself ; but we could not have known by it that the word 'Spirit' signifies a distinct person,—a doctrine for which we are indebted to divine revelation. As for the work of our redemption, in which, more than in all the other divine works, the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit is demonstrated, we could have known as little of that, by the light of nature, as we do of the Persons to whom it is attributed.

It will, I am aware, be objected, that our first parents knew the doctrine of the Trinity, as soon as they were created, else they could not have given that distinct glory to the Persons in the Godhead that is due to them,—that if we are required not only to worship the Divine Being, but to worship the Father, Son, and Spirit, and if this worship is due from us as creatures, and not merely as fallen and redeemed, it follows that our first parents must have known the doctrine of the Trinity ; and they knew it not by divine revelation, but by the light of nature. Now we will concede every thing in this objection, except that they did not know the doctrine by divine revelation. They certainly had some ideas conveyed to them at first by revelation, else they could not have known anything that related to instituted worship,—which, it is plain, they did. And shall it be reckoned any absurdity to suppose that they received the doctrine of the Trinity by divine revelation, though in the short history which Moses gives us of things relating to the state of



innocency, we have no particular account of their having so received it? It is sufficient to our purpose to suppose that it was agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God to make known to them this important truth, and that, in consequence, he actually did so, though not by the light of nature.

It is farther objected, that, as appears by their writings, the heathen, though they were unacquainted with scripture, knew something of the doctrine of the Trinity. To support this objection, reference is made to several mystical expressions in the works of Plato, when he speaks of three principles, which seem to look in the direction of the doctrine. One of the three principles of which he speaks, he calls goodness, or a being that is good; the second he calls his word, or reason; and the third a spirit, which diffuses its influence throughout the whole system of beings, and which he sometimes calls 'the soul of the world.' In other passages, he speaks of them as having a distinct sovereignty.<sup>q</sup> He supposes the first to be the cause of things most great and excellent; the second, the cause of things of an inferior nature; the third, the cause of things yet more inferior. And, some of his followers plainly call them 'three hypostases,' and sometimes, 'Father,' 'Word,' and 'Spirit.' Now, the account which Plato and his followers seem to have given of the doctrine of the Trinity, does not appear to have been taken from the light of nature; so that it affords no countenance to the principle of the objection. We have sufficient ground to conclude that Plato travelled into Egypt with a design to make improvements in knowledge; and some suppose that he saw there a translation of part of the Bible into Greek,<sup>r</sup> more ancient than that which is commonly attributed to the LXX, which was not compiled till a hundred years after his time. Whether he did this, or not, is uncertain. It is not to be doubted, however, that he used several expressions which are contained in the books of Moses, and that he took thence the plan of his laws. On this account some have called him 'a second Moses, speaking Greek.' But whether he received his notions immediately from scripture, or by conversation with the Jews, of whom a great number settled in Egypt after Gedaliah's death, is not material. It is sufficiently evident that he did not obtain all his notions, in a way of reasoning, from the light of nature. As for his followers, such as Plotinus, Proclus, Porphyry, and others, though none of them pretended to be Christians, and one of them was an inveterate enemy to Christianity, they lived in those ages when Christianity prevailed in the world; and they may well be supposed to have made their master Plato speak several things, as to the mystery of the Trinity, which he never intended, were it only to persuade the Christians that he was not inferior to Moses or any other hero of the scripture.

Having answered objections, we shall take leave to notice the incautiousness of some divines who have defended the doctrine of the Trinity. They have not only asserted that Plato understood a great deal of it, but have made use of this alleged fact as an answer to the Anti-trinitarian objection formerly mentioned, that the doctrine of the Trinity is unintelligible; and they have taken a great deal of pleasure in accounting for the doctrine, in such ways as the philosophers have done.<sup>s</sup> Some of them have taken notice of a few dark hints which they have met with in some of the poetical fictions, and have thence concluded that there was something of the Trinity known, even by the heathen in general. Thus when the word 'Three' is mentioned by the poets, and applied to some things which they relate concerning their Gods, or when they speak of God's delighting in an unequal number, or in the number 'Three,' they are supposed to have had some confused notion of the Trinity. This matter, however, is too gross to be particularly mentioned; for it might give us an unbecoming idea of this divine mystery, or of those who have better arguments to defend it. The reflection which I would make on it is, that what has been called an advantage to the doctrine, has been certainly very detrimental to it, and, as a late learned divine observes, has tended only to pervert the simplicity of the Christian faith with mixtures of philosophy and vain deceit.<sup>t</sup> I doubt not but the apostle had an eye to it, among other corruptions, which they

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Epist. 2. ad Dionys.      <sup>r</sup> Vid. Euseb. Prep. Evang. lib. xiii. cap. 12.      <sup>s</sup> Vid. Huet. Concord. Ration. and Fid. lib. ii. cap. 3.      <sup>t</sup> See Dr. Berriman's Historical Account, &c. page 94.



who were attached to the heathen philosophy had begun to bring into their scheme of divinity, and which others would notoriously introduce in after-ages, when he said, 'Beware, lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'<sup>u</sup> This corruption so much prevailed, that it has given occasion to some of the Anti-trinitarians to reproach the doctrine of the Trinity, as though it were a system of Platonism; and the fondness of the early Christian writers for using Plato's words, in explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, has given occasion for some of them to be suspected as having been unfavourable to the scripture account of it. Adversaries have, in consequence, laid claim to them as their own; and have produced some unwary expressions out of Justin Martyr, and others, to allege that they were favourable to the Arian scheme, though, in other parts of their writings, they appear remote from it.

This leads us to consider that some divines have used similitudes to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. These, at best, tend only to illustrate, and not to prove a doctrine. We can hardly make use of them for illustrating the doctrine of the Trinity without conveying some ideas which are unbecoming it, if not subversive of it; and while we pretend to explain that which is in itself inexplicable, we do no service to the truth. I shall here give a short specimen, that we may see how some have unwarily weakened the cause which they have been maintaining. Some have taken a similitude from three of the divine perfections. They say that there are three invisibles of God, power, wisdom, and goodness, and that power creates, wisdom governs, and goodness conserves; and so they have gone on to explain this doctrine, till they have almost given it into the hands of the Sabellians. Indeed, they might have instanced in more divine perfections than three, had it been to their purpose. Again, others have explained this doctrine, by some resemblance which they apprehend to be found of it in man; and they speak of the soul, as a principle of a threefold life, rational, sensitive, and vegetative. Others speak of three causes concurring to produce the same effect, the efficient, the constitutive, and the final cause. Others have taken their similitude from inanimate things,—as the sun, in which there are light, heat, and motion, which are inseparably connected together, and tend to produce the same effects. Others, again, illustrate the doctrine by a similitude taken from a fountain; in which there is the spring in the bowels of the earth, the water bubbling out of the earth, and the stream diffusing itself in a perpetual course, receiving all it communicates from the fountain. I am sorry there is occasion to caution any against this method of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity. But these, and many other similitudes of a similar nature, we find in the writings of some, who consider not what an advantage they give to the common enemy. There are, indeed, in most of the similitudes, three things, which are said, in different respects, to be one. But all the similitudes brought to illustrate this doctrine, lead us to think of the whole divided into those parts of which it consists. Writers notice these parts as three in number; or they speak of three properties of the same thing. And if their wit and fancy saw it needful to speak of more than three, the same method of illustration would serve their purpose, as much as it does the end for which they bring it. I would, therefore, conclude this head, by using the words of God to Job, 'Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?'<sup>x</sup> Who are these that, by pretending to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity by similitudes, do that, which, though very foreign to their design, tends to pervert it?

*Expository Rules respecting the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

We shall now consider what general rules may be observed for our understanding those scriptures on which our faith, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, is founded. Since it is a doctrine of pure revelation, as has been before observed, we must keep close to scripture, to the very words where they are express and distinct on the subject, and to consequences deduced from them so far as these are

just and self-evident. At the same time, while we are sensible that we cannot comprehend this mystery, we must take care that we pretend not to be wise above what is revealed. Now there are some rules, which may be of use to us in our inquiries into the sense of scripture concerning this doctrine.

1. We must not suppose that the words of scripture, relating to it, are to be taken in a sense which can be known by none but critics, as though it were designed to be understood only by them, or as if the unlearned part of the world should be left in the dark, or led astray as to several things which it contains. We are not to suppose, for example, that we are at a loss as to the proper sense of the word 'God;' or that we can hardly know how to direct our faith and worship founded on it without the help of criticism, or that we shall be led to ascribe divine honour where it is not due, for want of being acquainted with some distinctions concerning one that may be called God by nature, or the supreme God, and others who may be called God by office, or subordinate Gods. Nor is it incumbent on us that either we must be able to distinguish concerning different kinds of worship; or instead of honouring the Son as we honour the Father, we must give him an inferior kind of divine worship, short of what is due to the Father. For such worship as this, we have not scripture warrant; nor are we led by the scriptures to have any notion of a middle being between God and the creature, or one that is not properly God, as the Father is, and yet more than a creature, as though there were a medium between finite and infinite; nor are we led by scripture to conceive of any being, that has an eternal duration, whose eternity is supposed to be before time, and yet not the same with the eternal duration of the Father. These things we shall have occasion to mention in their proper place. We need, therefore, make no farther mention of them at present; but may only observe, how unintelligible the scripture would be in what relates to the doctrine of the Trinity, if the words had not a plain and determinate sense, so that we should require to make use of such methods of reasoning in order to arrive at the meaning of them.

2. If some divine perfections are attributed in scripture to the Son and Spirit, all the perfections of the divine nature, by reason of their simplicity and unity,<sup>y</sup> may, by a just consequence, be proved to belong to them. Hence, if we can prove, from scripture, that they have ascribed to them some perfections which are properly divine,—which, I hope, it will not be a difficult matter to do,—we are not to suppose that our argument is defective, or that the doctrine of the Trinity is not sufficiently maintained, though we cannot produce a scripture to prove every perfection of the divine nature to be ascribed to them.

3. When any thing is mentioned, in scripture, concerning our Saviour, or the Holy Spirit, which argues an inferiority to the Father, it is to be understood consistently with other scriptures, which speak of their having the same divine nature; for scripture does not, in the least, contradict itself. How the two classes of texts on this subject are to be understood, will be farther considered under a following head.

4. If we have sufficient arguments to convince us of the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, our faith ought not to be shaken though we cannot fully understand the sense of some scriptures, which are brought to oppose it. Not that we are to suppose that the scripture gives countenance to two opposite doctrines; but a person may be fully satisfied concerning the sense of those scriptures, which contain the doctrine of the Trinity, and yet not be supposed perfectly to understand the meaning of every word, or phrase, used in scripture, or of some particular texts, which are sometimes brought to support the contrary doctrine; so that objections may be brought, which he is not able readily to reply to. Shall he, therefore, deny the truth, because he cannot remove all the difficulties that seem to lie in the way of it? That would be to part with it at too easy a rate; and when he has done this, he will find greater difficulties attending the contrary scheme of doctrine. Do Anti-trinitarians object that we believe things contrary to reason, because we assert the incomprehensibility of divine mysteries? or that we are Tritheists, because we believe that there are three Persons in the Godhead, and cannot exactly determine the difference between divine and human personality? We could, on the other



hand, point at some difficulties, that they cannot easily surmount. What shall we think of their giving divine worship to our Saviour, when, at the same time, they deny him to have those perfections that denominate him God in the same sense as the Father? The Socinians found it very difficult, when the matter was disputed among themselves, as to their worshipping him whose deity they denied, to reconcile their practice with their sentiments. The Arians will find that this objection equally affects their scheme; and it will be no less difficult for them to reconcile Christ's character, as Redeemer, Governor of the world, Judge of quick and dead, with their low ideas of him, when denying his proper deity. These things we only mention occasionally at present, that it may not be thought that the doctrine of the Trinity is exposed to greater difficulties than the contrary doctrine; and that they who are not furnished with all those qualifications which are necessary for its defence, may not reckon those arguments, by which they have been convinced of the truth of it, less valid, because they are not able, at present, to answer all objections that may be brought against them.

5. The weight of several arguments taken from scripture to prove the doctrine of the Trinity, is to be considered as well as the arguments themselves. We do not pretend that every one of them is equally conclusive. There are some which are often brought to support it, which we can lay no great stress upon; and these we shall omit to mention, lest we should give occasion to the adversary to insult, or conclude that we take anything for an argument that has been brought as such to prove this doctrine. We will not pretend to prove, therefore, or peremptorily to determine, that the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in those words of the psalmist, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.'<sup>z</sup> Nor will we pretend to prove this doctrine from the threefold repetition of the word 'Jehovah,' in the form of a benediction to be used by the High Priest, 'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.'<sup>a</sup> Nor do we lay any stress on the threefold repetition of the word, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts;'<sup>b</sup> though we shall show, in its proper place, that there are several things in the context which evidently prove this doctrine. Yet if, together with arguments that are more conclusive, we, at any time, bring some that are less so, we may at least infer that the scripture way of speaking is consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity in places that do not so directly prove it. This we have thought proper to mention, because it is a very common thing for those who cannot answer the most weighty arguments that are brought to support a doctrine, to bend their greatest force against those which have the least strength, and then to triumph as though they had gained the victory, when they have done it only in what respects that which is less material.

#### *Definition of Terms on the Subject of the Trinity.*

We shall now consider in what sense we are to understand the words 'Trinity' and 'Persons in the Godhead;' and in what respect the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are said to be one. The word 'Trinity' is not to be found in scripture, yet what we understand by it is plainly contained in it. We therefore use the word as agreeable to scripture. Thus we read that there are 'three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost,' and that 'these three are one.'<sup>c</sup> The three here mentioned are Persons, because they are described by personal characters. We shall take occasion elsewhere, when we prove the Deity of the Son and Spirit, to consider their being one, that is, their having the same nature. This subject we shall waive at present, as we are considering only the sense of words commonly used by us in treating of the doctrine.

All contending parties, however they have explained the word 'Trinity,' have, in compliance with custom, used the word, and have so far defined it as to understand by it 'three, who are, in some respect, one.' Some writers, however, have not cared to

<sup>z</sup> Psal. xxxiii. 6.

<sup>a</sup> Num. vi. 24—26.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. vi. 3.

<sup>c</sup> 1 John v. 7.



use the word 'person;' or if they have, it is without the most known and proper idea contained in it. The Sabellians, for example, whenever they use the word, intend nothing by it but three relations, which may be attributed to the same person, as when the same person may be called a father, a son, and a brother, in different respects; or as when he that, at one time, sustains the person of a judge, may, at another time, sustain that of an advocate. This is what some call a Trinity of names; and they might as well have declined to use the words altogether, as to explain them in this sense. Again, the Arians use the word 'person.' They have run, however, into another extreme; and while they avoid Sabellianism, they would lay themselves open to the charge of Tritheism, did they not deny the proper deity of the Son and Spirit. They suppose that every distinct Person is a distinct being, agreeably to the sense of personality as applied to men. This sense of the word, however, as has been already considered, is to be abstracted from the idea of personality, when applied to the Persons in the Godhead. The Arians also understand the oneness of the divine Persons in a sense agreeable to their own scheme, and different from ours: they speak of them as one in will, consent, or design,—in which respect, God and the creature may be said to be one. Accordingly, Arius and his adherents, in the council at Nice, refused to allow that the divine Persons were *ὁμοουσιος* consubstantial, and, with a great many evasions and subterfuges, attempted to conceal their sentiments. All that they could be brought to own was, that the Son was *ὁμοιος*, or *ὁμοιουσιος*; which amounts to no more than this,—that whatever likeness there may be, in some respects, yet he has not the same proper divine nature with the Father and Holy Ghost.

We are now led to consider the sense in which the word 'person' is generally used by those who defend what we think to be the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity. There are some, it is true, both among ancient and modern writers, who attempt to explain what they mean by the word 'person,' who are so unhappy as to leave the sense of it more dark than they found it: they define it, agreeably to the usages of metaphysicians and schoolmen, to this effect,—that it is a *suppositum*, endowed with reason,—or that it is one entire, individual, incommunicable, rational subsistence. Others, when they define Personality, tell us, that it is a positive mode of a being, terminating and completing its substantial nature, and giving incommunicability to it,—words which need to be explained more than the thing defined by them. Here I cannot but take notice of that warm debate which there was between the Greek and Latin church about the words 'Hypostasis' and 'Persona.' The Latin church concluding that the word 'Hypostasis' signified substance or essence, thought that to assert that there were three divine Hypostases, was to say that there were three Gods. On the other hand, the Greek church thought that the word 'Persona' did not sufficiently guard against the Sabellian notion, of the same being sustaining three relations. On these grounds, each part of the church was ready to brand the other with heresy; till, by a free and mutual conference, in a synod at Alexandria, A. D. 362, they made it appear, that their dispute was but a contention about the grammatical sense of a word. It was then allowed, by men of temper on both sides, that the two words might be indifferently used.<sup>a</sup> But what signifies the use of them, when perplexed with the scholastic explications of them? These have given occasion to some whose sentiments have been very conflicting as to the doctrine of the Trinity, to express themselves with some dislike. On the one hand, the Socinians, and some among the Remonstrants who made very great advances towards their scheme, such as, Curcellæus, Episcopius, and others,<sup>b</sup> have complained that this doctrine was clouded with hard words; and, though their design might be to substitute such words as would make the remedy worse than the disease, their complaint is not altogether groundless. On the other hand, some who have embraced the doctrine of the Trinity, would not have liked its advocates the worse, had they chosen to have defended it in a more plain and intelligible manner. Calvin himself wishes that some words which are so warmly opposed and defended on each side, were al-

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Forbes, Instruct. Hist. Theol. lib. i. cap. 2. § 8.  
de Voc. Trinit. Personæ, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Curcell. in Quatern. Dissert.

together laid aside and buried, provided that such might be retained as express our faith in the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Spirit, being the one God, but distinguished by their personal properties.<sup>c</sup> This is that plain sense of the word 'person' which I shall make use of, in what I shall attempt to lay down in its defence.

We never call any thing a person that is not endowed with understanding and will. The most glorious inanimate creatures, either in heaven or earth, whatever excellencies they have, or how useful soever they are to the world, are not persons. When the sun is described as though it were a person, and is compared to 'a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race,'<sup>d</sup> the words are never understood in any other but a metaphorical sense. So 'behemoth' and the 'leviathan,' mentioned in Job, being no other than brute creatures, are described with personal characters, in the same figurative way of speaking. We always suppose a person to have an understanding and will. Again, whenever, 'I,' 'Thou,' and 'He,' are applied to any subject, they always denote a person,—'I,' a person speaking; 'Thou,' a person spoken to; and 'He,' or 'Him,' a person spoken of. When such modes of speaking are sometimes applied to things that are destitute of reason, or to any moral virtues or principles of acting, which, from the nature of the thing, cannot be denominated persons, they are very easily understood in a figurative sense; and this may, without any difficulty, be distinguished from the proper sense, whereby those who are so denoted are denominated persons. There are also some characters which always denote persons, and some works performed which are properly personal, and can be performed by none but persons. Thus a father, or a son, a Creator, a Redeemer, a benefactor, a Mediator, an advocate, a surety, a judge, a lord, a lawgiver, and many others of a similar nature, are all personal characters. Hence, whoever acts with design, and has such characters attributed to him, we call, according to the proper acceptation of the word, a person. These characters we shall endeavour to apply to the Persons in the Godhead, to prove their distinct personality. But since we are at present considering only the acceptation of words, we shall briefly observe the difference between a divine and a human person, when some personal properties, characters, or works, are attributed to each of them.

Human persons are separated one from the other. Thus, Peter, James, and John, were three persons, but they were separated one from the other. On the other hand, the Persons in the Godhead, however distinguished by their characters and properties, are never separated, as having the same divine essence or nature. As for human persons, one of them might have had a being and personality had the other never existed, because it exists by the will of God. But the divine Persons have a necessary existence and personality, as being, in all respects, independent; so that as they could not but be God, they could not but be divine Persons. The personality of the Son and the Spirit are equally independent with that of the Father, and as much independent as their being and divine perfections.—Again, human persons have only the same kind of nature, which is generally called a common specific nature, but not the same individual nature with another person. Though every man has a nature like that of the rest of mankind, yet the human nature, as attributed to one person, is not the same individual human nature that is attributed to another; for then the power and act of reasoning, or the ideas that there are in one man, would be the same power and the same individual ideas that are in another. But when we speak of the Persons in the Godhead as having the divine nature and perfections, we say that this nature is the same individual nature in all of them, though the Persons are distinct; otherwise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, could not be said to be truly and properly God, and to have the same understanding, will, and other perfections of the divine nature.—Further, when we speak of human persons, we say that as many persons as there are, so many beings there are. Every human person has its own proper being, distinct from all other persons or beings. But we do not say so with respect to the divine Persons; for the divine Being is but one, and the Godhead of the

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Calv. Institut. lib. i. cap. 13. § 5.

<sup>d</sup> Psal. xix. 5.



Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the very same. This is what we understand when we say, that though there are three Persons in the Godhead, yet they are the same in substance, or the one only living and true God.

This leads us to consider in what respect the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are said to be one. By this we mean that the Son and Holy Ghost have all the perfections of the divine nature, in the same sense as the Father has. To say less than this, is to assert no more than what our adversaries will allow. They will not deny them perfections, nor would they be thought to deny them to have divine perfections; yea, many of them will not stick to say, that they are truly and properly God,—by which they mean, that whatever deity is attributed to them in scripture, by the appointment of the Father, that is, whatever divine authority they have, properly belongs to them. I think, however, that none of them will allow that they have the divine nature in the same sense in which the Father is said to have it. This is what we shall endeavour to prove; and more than this needs not be said in order to establish that the same supreme worship is due to the Son and the Spirit, as to the Father. In order to this, we shall consider the force of those arguments contained in one of the Answers, and, together with them, the sense of that scripture, in which our Saviour says, ‘I and my Father are one;’<sup>e</sup> as also that scripture ‘the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, who bear record in heaven, are one.’<sup>f</sup> But the consideration of these we shall reserve to a following head.

As to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost being ‘equal in power and glory,’ we may observe, that there are two expressions, which we often use, to set forth the deity of the Son and Spirit: we sometimes say that they are God, equal with the Father,—at other times, that they have the same essential perfections. Some may, perhaps, reply, that if they are equal, they cannot be the same; or, on the other hand, if they are the same, they cannot be equal. Now, for understanding what we mean by such expressions, let it be observed, that when we consider them as having the divine essence, or any of its perfections, we choose to describe them, not as equal, but as the same. We, for example, do not say that the wisdom, power, or holiness, of the Son and Spirit, is equal to the same perfection as ascribed to the Father. But when we speak of them as distinct Persons, then we consider them as equal. The essential glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the same; but their personal glory is equal. In this sense we would be understood, when we say the Son and Holy Ghost are each of them God, or divine Persons, equal with the Father.

We shall now, by applying what has been observed as to the meaning of the word ‘person,’ prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are distinct Persons in the Godhead, and we shall add something concerning those personal properties mentioned in one of the Answers we are explaining with respect to the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost.

### *The Personality of the Son.*

As to the personality of the Son, inasmuch as the Arians and Socinians never yet called it in question, we own that it is not necessary, when we dispute with them, to prove it. The Sabellians, however, deny it; and also a late writer,<sup>g</sup> who plainly gives in to their scheme, and concludes the Son of God to be no other than the eternal reason of God. Accordingly, he thus renders John i. 1. ‘In the beginning was the word,’ that is, reason, ‘and by him,’ that is, by it, ‘were all things made.’ And when it is objected, that this mode of speaking signifies nothing more than a quality in God, the only answer that he gives is, that it signifies no more a quality, than if we should translate it, ‘The Word,’ as is generally done. Now if persons, whether they pretend to be Sabellians or not, express themselves in such a manner, it is necessary for us to prove the personality of the Son. We shall, therefore, state two arguments to show that the Son is a distinct Person from the Father.

<sup>e</sup> John x. 30.      <sup>f</sup> 1 John v. 7.  
New Testament, preface to John i.

<sup>g</sup> See Le Clerc’s Supplement to Dr. Hammond on the



1. We often read, in scripture, of two divine Persons speaking to or of one another, the distinguishing personal characters, 'I,' 'Thou,' and 'He,' being applied to them. Thus it is said, 'The Lord,' that is, the Father, 'said unto my Lord,' namely, the Son, 'Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'<sup>h</sup> This may be observed throughout the whole psalm. Thus, 'Thy people shall be willing';<sup>i</sup> and 'He,' meaning the Son, 'shall judge among the heathen';<sup>k</sup> and 'He shall drink of the brook in the way.'<sup>l</sup> So, in another psalm, speaking of the Son, 'Thou art fairer than the children of men'; and 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.'<sup>m</sup> The places of scripture where we have such modes of speaking concerning the Son, are almost innumerable. We, therefore, proceed to consider that,

2. Other personal characters are given him. Thus, when he is called the Son of God, whatever we are to understand by that relation or character, (of which more shall be said under a following head,) it certainly denotes him a Person distinct from the Father. His being sent into the world by the Father, which is frequently affirmed of him in the New Testament, also proves this; for a quality, relation, or property, cannot be said to be sent, as the Son is. So when he is described as a Redeemer, a Mediator, a Surety, a Creator, and when he is styled, by the prophet, the everlasting Father, and often described as a Prophet, Priest, or King, and when he is called, 'Lord of all,' or 'the Prince of peace,' or 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,' all these characters sufficiently prove his personality. All those works likewise which he performs, as sustaining these relations or characters, are properly personal; and some of them are never ascribed to any other person. Thus the Father, or Holy Ghost, are never said to assume the human nature, or to become sureties for the salvation of men, or to execute mediatorial offices. From all these considerations it evidently appears, that the Son is a distinct Person. That he is a divine Person, will be proved under a following head; and objections to his personality will be answered along with those to the personality of the Holy Ghost.

### *The Personality of the Holy Spirit.*

The distinct personality of the Holy Ghost is denied, not only by the Sabellians, but by some of the Socinians. Socinus himself denies it. He describes the Holy Ghost as the power of God,—intending hereby, as his mode of speaking seems to denote, the energy of the divine nature, or that whereby the Father, who is the only one to whom, according to him, the divine nature is attributed, produces those effects which required infinite power. The Socinians, accordingly, call the Spirit, the power of God essentially considered. They set aside all those proofs that may be produced from scripture to evince his personality,—proofs which are so plain and evident, that many of them have, in this particular, dissented from Socinus, and owned the Spirit to be a Person. Accordingly some of them, while they deny his divine nature, have described him as the chief of created Spirits, or the Head of the Angels. A bold writer expresses himself thus: "I believe that there is one principal Minister of God and Christ, peculiarly sent from heaven, to sanctify the church, who, by reason of his eminency and intimacy with God, is singled out of the number of the other heavenly Ministers, or Angels, and comprised in the holy Trinity, being the third Person thereof; and that this Minister of God and Christ is the Holy Spirit."<sup>n</sup>

We shall prove the Personality of the Holy Ghost, by considering some personal characters ascribed to him, and works performed by him. There are several such characters, by which he is denominated a Person. When, in particular, he is called a Sanctifier, a Reprover, a Witness, a Comforter, it evidently appears that he is a Person. It is said, that 'when he,' that is, 'the Comforter, is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment'; and also, that 'he will guide you into all truth; he will show you things to come,'<sup>o</sup> &c. In one passage, the distinct personality of the three Persons, and particularly of the Holy Spirit, is asserted: 'I

h Psal. cx. 1. i Ver. 3. k Ver. 6. l Ver. 7. m Psal. xlv. 2, 6. n See Biddle's Confession of Faith, touching the Holy Trinity, Article VI. o John xvi. 8, 13.

will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth;’ and ‘The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.’<sup>m</sup> Now, it is certain, that to teach, or to instruct, is a personal character. So also is to speak or to dictate to another what he should say, and this the Holy Ghost is said by our Saviour to his disciples to do: ‘Whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.’<sup>n</sup> Moreover, to witness, or testify, is a personal character, when the testimony is not merely objective, as when Job calls his ‘wrinkles’ and his ‘leanness’ a witness against him.<sup>o</sup> When there is a formal testimony given, he that gives it is, according to our common way of speaking, generally considered a person. And thus the Holy Ghost is described: ‘We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.’<sup>p</sup> Here the Holy Ghost being a witness, is as much a personal character as their being witnesses. And it is also said, ‘The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.’<sup>q</sup> Again, dwelling is a personal character. No one ever supposes that anything that is in a house dwells there, excepting persons. But the Holy Ghost is said to dwell in believers;<sup>r</sup> and, alluding to this, it is also said: ‘Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.’<sup>s</sup> As a house is the dwelling-place of a person, so a temple is the dwelling-place of a divine person. Again, to send any one is a personal character. But this also is attributed to the Holy Ghost: The apostles ‘being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed.’<sup>t</sup> Again, acting with a sovereign will and pleasure, is what belongs only to a person; and this is applied to the Holy Ghost: ‘It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.’<sup>u</sup> Again, prohibiting or forbidding a person to act, is a personal character. This likewise is applied to the Holy Ghost: The apostles ‘were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.’<sup>x</sup> Again, to constitute or appoint any one to execute an office, is a personal character. This the Holy Ghost is said to have done, when he made the elders of Ephesus overseers of the flock.<sup>y</sup> There are several other personal works and characters, which might have been mentioned; but these are, I humbly conceive, sufficient to prove that the Holy Ghost is a Person. I have no more than mentioned the scriptures which exhibit these personal characters; because I shall have occasion, under a following head, to refer to some of them for the proof of his Deity.

It will be objected, by those who are favourers of the Sabellian scheme, that the characters which we have laid down to prove the personality of the Son, and Holy Ghost, are not sufficient to answer that end; for they are often applied, in a metaphorical way, to those things which no one supposes to be persons, and may be taken in this sense when applied to the Son and Spirit. To support this objection, they produce several instances out of the book of Job, and some other parts of scripture, where things which are not really persons are described with personal characters. Thus, speaking concerning the unicorn, it is said, ‘Wilt thou trust him? Wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?’<sup>z</sup> So, concerning the horse, as though he acted with design as an intelligent creature, it is said, ‘He goeth on to meet the armed men; he mocketh at fear; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet; he saith among the trumpets, Ha! ha!’<sup>a</sup> Concerning the eagle, ‘She dwelleth on the rock.’<sup>b</sup> And concerning the leviathan, ‘Will he make many

m John xiv. 16, 17, 26. Some have thought that *κςνος*, being of the masculine gender, because it refers immediately to *πνμα*, which is of the neuter, implies, that the Spirit is taken personally, which is the reason of this grammatical construction. But if it be said that the reason why it is masculine is, because it agrees with *παρκλητος*, it notwithstanding proves the personality of the Holy Ghost, since a comforter is a personal character. The same thing is observed in the grammatical construction of Ephes. i. 13, 14, which, speaking concerning the Holy Spirit of promise, *το πνμα της σαρραλίας*, says, *στιν αράβαν*. This denotes the personal character of the Spirit; otherwise it would have been *στιν αράβαν*,—unless you could suppose *ς* to agree with *αράβαν*, which seems to be a more strained sense of the grammatical construction than the other which proves his personality.

n Mark xiii. 11.

s John xiv. 17.

x Acts xvi. 6.

b Ver 28.

o Job xvi. 8.

s 1 Cor. vi. 19.

y Acts xx. 28.

p Acts v. 32.

t Acts xiii. 4.

z Job xxxix. 11, 12.

q Acts xx. 23.

u Acts xv. 28.

a Ver. 21 &c.



supplications unto thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. Darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of the spear; he beholdeth all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride.<sup>c</sup> There are many other personal characters given to brute creatures, which are taken in a metaphorical sense; and sometimes they are applied to inanimate creatures. Thus, 'Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?'<sup>d</sup> By this description nothing is intended but the signs in the zodiac, or some of the constellations, together with the particular stars of which they consist; yet these are described as though they were persons. So, 'Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?'<sup>e</sup> Again, the powers and faculties of the soul of man have sometimes personal characters ascribed to them. Thus conscience is said to 'bear witness.'<sup>f</sup> And some instances may be brought from scripture of a person's speaking to himself; yet these do not prove that there are two persons in man, one speaking, and the other spoken to. It is therefore inferred, that we cannot prove the personality of the Son and Holy Ghost from those personal characters ascribed to them; which may be taken in a metaphorical sense, as well as in the instances now mentioned.

In answer to this objection, several things may be considered. 1. Though the scripture often uses figurative, and particularly metaphorical, ways of speaking; yet these may be easily distinguished from similar phrases used elsewhere, concerning which we have sufficient ground to conclude that they are to be taken in a proper sense. Though it is true, therefore, that there are personal characters given to things which are not persons; yet we are not to conclude, that whenever the same modes of speaking are applied to those who are capable of performing personal actions, they must be taken in a metaphorical sense; for that sense is a known exception to the common idea contained in words. 2. Most of those passages of scripture, where personal characters are attributed, in a metaphorical sense, to things which are not persons, are in the poetical books, or in some particular places where there is a peculiar beautiful mode of speaking taken from poetry. Will it therefore follow, that these personal characters are used in other parts of scripture, in which the Holy Ghost does not think fit to express himself in such an elegance of style? Now it is certain, that the personal characters before-mentioned are, throughout the whole scripture, given to the Son, and Holy Ghost, in places where there is no design of using a lofty figurative or uncommon way of speaking, as in the instances of the poetical passages. 3. We must not suppose that the Holy Ghost uses any figurative ways of speaking, so as to cast a veil on plain truths, or to endanger our being led out of the way, as we should certainly be, if the many hundreds of places in scripture in which these personal characters are applied to the Son and Spirit, were to be taken in a metaphorical sense, without any intimation given in the context that they are so to be understood. And it will certainly be very difficult to find out any place in scripture that may serve to direct us in our application of these characters, and to show, as applied to the persons in the Godhead, when they are to be taken in a metaphorical sense, and when not. 4. Though we find many metaphors in scripture, yet the most important truths are laid down in the plainest manner, so that the injudicious and unlearned reader, who understands nothing of the art of rhetoric or criticism, is able to understand them. They are, at least, not universally wrapt up in figurative ways of speaking. Now, it would be strange, if the account we have of the personality of the Son and Holy Ghost, which is a doctrine of the highest importance, and such as renders them distinct objects of worship, should be expressed in such a way, as that we should be at the greatest uncertainty whether they are persons or not. 5. If personal characters are not metaphorical, when applied to men or angels, who are subjects capable of having personality attributed to them, why should they be



reckoned metaphorical, when applied to the Son and Spirit, who, though they are not distinct beings, yet have a divine understanding and will, and therefore are not rendered incapable of having personality ascribed to them, as signified by these characters? 6. To assert that personal characters, attributed to the Son and Spirit, are always to be understood in a metaphorical sense, would give equal ground to conclude that they are to be so understood when applied to the Father. Accordingly, if we militate against their personality, we shall, at the same time, overthrow his personality; and if we deny that there are three Persons in the Godhead, we shall, in effect, suppose that there are no Persons in the Godhead, any otherwise than as the Godhead, which is common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, is often described as though it were a Person; and if ever the word 'personality' is used or applied in a metaphorical sense, it must be when the Godhead is so described. 7. Though some personal characters are occasionally applied, in a metaphorical sense, to things that are not Persons, yet it is not usual for these to be described as performing personal works. When, in particular, any statements describe personal works, not in the way of occasional hint, or in connexion with metaphorical modes of speaking, but as a long series of action, and in a variety of performances, they must certainly be understood in a proper sense. Thus, when the Son and Spirit are set forth in scripture as performing those works which are expressive of their personal glory,—the one in what respects the purchase of redemption, and the other in the application of it; and when each of them is described as standing in those relations to men which are founded in the performance of these works, certainly what is said of them must be understood in a most proper sense. We must take heed, lest, while we attempt to prove that the Persons in the Godhead are to be taken in a figurative sense, we do not give occasion to any to think that the great benefits which we receive from them are to be understood in the same sense.

*The Personal Properties of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

We shall now take notice of some other personal properties, whereby the Son and Spirit are distinguished from one another, and from the Father. We shall notice these as they are expressed in one of the Answers under our present consideration. 'It is proper to the Father to beget the Son,' or, as it is sometimes expressed, to be unbegotten, 'and to the Son, to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, to proceed from the Father and the Son, from all eternity.' This is certainly one of the most difficult heads of divinity that can be insisted on; and some have made it more so, by their attempting to explain it. I have sometimes thought that it would be the safest and most eligible way, to pass it over, as a doctrine less necessary to be understood. There are, however, several scripture-expressions, on which it is founded, which we ought to pay the greatest deference to, much more than to those explications which are merely human. The properties also plainly prove the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be distinct Persons; and we must therefore humbly inquire into the meaning of those scriptures in which they are mentioned. We must thus say something as to what is generally called the eternal generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Ghost. And I hope, through divine assistance, we shall advance no doctrine that is either subversive of our faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, which we are endeavouring to maintain; or derogatory to the essential or personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit; or altogether contrary to the sense in which many Christians, who are unacquainted with those modes of speaking used by the fathers and schoolmen, understand those scriptures upon which this doctrine is founded.

Here we shall give a brief account of what we apprehend to be the commonly received sentiments of divines, who, in their writings, have strenuously maintained, and judiciously defended, the doctrine of the Trinity, concerning the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost. This I shall endeavour to do with the greatest deference to those who have treated of these subjects, as well as with the greatest impartiality; and I shall take occasion to show how far the Arians conclude that we give up the cause to them, and yet how little reason they have to insult us upon this head.

As to the eternal generation of the Son, it is generally explained in this manner. The Father is called by some, 'the fountain of the Godhead,' an expression taken from some of the fathers who defended the Nicene faith. But others, of late, have rather chosen to call the Father the fountain of the Trinity; and he is said to be of himself, or unbegotten. This they state as his personal character, distinct from that of the Son. On the other hand, the Son, as to his personality, is generally described as being from the Father. Many choose to express themselves about this mystery in these terms,—'the Father communicated the divine essence to the Son.' This is the most common mode of speaking; though others think it safer to say, that he communicated the divine personality to him. I cannot tell, however, which is least exceptionable. But when I find others using the phrase, 'the Father gave the divine essence to the Son,' their mode of speaking being founded, as they apprehend, on that scripture, 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself,'<sup>a</sup> I cannot but think it is an unguarded expression, and foreign to the design of the Holy Ghost in that scripture, as will be hereafter considered. The Arians are ready to insult us upon such modes of speaking, and suppose us to conclude that the Son receives his divine perfections, and therefore cannot be God equal with the Father. None of those, however, who use such expressions, suppose that the Son's deity is founded on the arbitrary will of the Father; for they all assert that the divine nature is communicated necessarily, and from all eternity, as the sun communicates its rays necessarily, which are of equal duration with it. Hence, while they make use of a word which, according to its most known acceptation, seems subversive of the truth, they happily, for truth's sake, explain away the proper sense of it; so that all they can be blamed for by the adversary, is an impropriety of expression. Again, others speak a little more exceptionably, when, explaining the eternal generation of the Son, they say that the Father produced him. But this idea they also happily explain away; saying that the production of which they speak, is not such as in the case of the cause producing the effect. Some of the fathers, indeed, who have been in the Trinitarian scheme, have unwarily called the Father the cause of the Son. Yet our modern divines seldom or never use that expression; or, if they speak of an eternal production, they suppose it to differ vastly from the production of creatures, or from production in that sense in which the Arians suppose the Son to be produced. The expression, however, had certainly better be laid aside, lest it should be thought that we conclude the Son not equally necessary, and, from all eternity, co-existent with the Father; which our divines, how unwarily soever in other respects they may express themselves, are very far from denying.

We shall now consider how some divines express themselves, concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost. On this subject, they generally speak as though the divine essence were communicated by the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghost. Hence, they suppose that the Holy Ghost, at least as he is a divine Person, or has the divine nature communicated to him, cannot, any more than the Son, be said to be of himself, but is from the Father and the Son, from whom he proceeds, or receives, as some express it, the divine nature, or as others say, the divine personality. Others speak of the Spiration of the Holy Ghost, which they suppose to be the same with his procession. The word, however, is much at a loss to understand what they mean by the word 'Spiration.' It seems to be a mere metaphorical expression, as when they call him the breath of the Father and the Son; and if so, it will not express his proper personality. But since we are much in the dark about the reason of this mode of speaking, it would be better to lay it aside, as many modern writers have done.

As to the manner of the procession of the Holy Ghost, there was, about the eighth and ninth centuries, a very warm dispute between the Greek and the Latin church, whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father only, or from the Father and the Son. The controversy rose to such a height, that they charged one another with heresy and schism; though neither side well understood what they contended about. Had they agreed to the healing expedient, afterwards proposed,



that they should mutually acknowledge that the Holy Ghost was from the Father by the Son, the matter would have been left as much in the dark as it was before. Some speak of the procession of the Holy Ghost, as though he was produced by the Father and the Son, as the Son, as was before observed, is said, in his eternal generation, to be produced by the Father. Yet they suppose that the production of neither of them was such that they may be called effects,—for that would be to give away the cause we contend for; and they term it the production of a Person in, and not out of, the divine essence. But which way soever we understand the phrase, it contains such an impropriety of expression as can hardly be defended. It is much better indeed to explain away the proper and grammatical sense of words, than to corrupt the truth; yet I would not follow them in this mode of speaking. Moreover, some have pretended to determine the difference between the eternal generation of the Son, and the Spirit's procession. They, with modesty, premise indeed that the matter is not to be explained; but, as far as they enter into it, they suppose the difference to be this,—that in the eternal generation of the Son, the Father communicated the divine essence, or, at least, personality to him, which is his act alone, and herewith he communicated a property, or power, to him, to communicate the same divine essence to the Holy Ghost, while in the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, there is no power conveyed to him to communicate the divine essence to any other as a fourth Person in the Godhead. These things may be observed in the writings of those who treat of this subject. It is to be feared, however, that they enter too far into the explication of this unsearchable mystery; and some will be ready to conclude that they attempt to be wise above what is written.

In giving my own sense of the communication of the divine essence, I shall probably be thought not to say enough concerning it; yet I hope that, in other respects, none will conclude that I advance any thing subversive of the doctrine of the Trinity. I assert that the divine essence is not communicated by the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost, as imparting or conveying it to them. I take the word 'communicate' in another sense, and say that all the perfections of the divine nature are communicated, that is, equally attributed to, or predicated of, the Father, Son and Spirit. This sense of the word is what some intend when they say the human nature is communicated to every individual, on which account they are denominated men. The word is sometimes used in this sense by logicians and schoolmen; and it seems to be taken in the same sense in Heb. ii. 14. where the Greek words, *τα παῖδια κκοινωνησιν σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος*, which we render, 'the children were partakers of flesh and blood,' might be rendered, as in the vulgar Latin Version, *Communicaverunt carni et sanguini*, that is, they have the human nature communicated to, and predicated of, them, or they are truly and properly men. It is in this sense that we use the word, when we say that the different properties of the divine and human nature are communicated to, that is, predicated of the Person of Christ. This, divines generally call a communication of properties. In this sense I would be understood, when I say that the divine perfections are communicated to, or predicated of, the Father, Son, and Spirit; and this all who maintain the doctrine of the Trinity will allow of. [See note 2 L, page 241.] The other sense of communication—namely, imparting, conveying, or giving the divine essence—I shall be very ready to agree to, when the apparent difficulties, which, to me, seem to lie in the way of it, some of which have been already considered, are removed.

As to what concerns the farther explication of this mystery, we may observe, that the more nice some have been in their speculations about it, the more they have seemed bewildered. Thus some have inquired whether the eternal generation is one single act, or an act continued,—or whether, when it is said, 'This day have I begotten thee,' the meaning is, that the divine nature was communicated at once, or is perpetually communicating.<sup>5</sup> The difficulties that attend their asserting either the one or the other—which they who inquire into these matters, take notice of—I shall entirely pass over, apprehending that this doctrine receives no advan-

<sup>5</sup> Some, who take delight in darkening this matter, by pretending to explain it, call the former *α το νου* stans; the latter, *fluens*.



tage by such disquisitions. Neither do I think it tends much to our edification to inquire, as some have done, whether, in the eternal generation, the Father is considered as acting, and the Son as the subject on whom the action terminates ; or whether—as they farther inquire, but are not willing to assert—the Son, in this respect, is said to be passive. And I cannot but take notice of another nicety of inquiry,—namely, whether, in the eternal generation, the Son is considered as co-existent with the Father, or as having the divine essence, and hereby deriving only his sonship from him, from all eternity ; or whether he derives both his sonship and his essence. The former of these is the more generally received opinion. But I am not desirous to enter into this inquiry ; especially without first determining what we mean by ‘sonship.’ Yet whatever explication be given of the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, it is at least necessary to inquire, whether they are each of them self-existent, or, as some call it, *αὐτοδίοις*. It is generally determined, that the Son and Holy Ghost have the same self-existent divine nature. With respect, however, to their manner of having it, some say that the Son has his divine nature from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and Son ; or that the Father only is self-existent. Most others say, that the Father is self-subsistent ; and that this is his personal property, as he is distinguished from the Son and Holy Ghost, whom they conclude not to be self-subsistent, but the one to subsist from the Father, and the other from the Father and the Son. This is a generally received opinion. I must confess myself, however, to be a little at a loss to account for it. Hence, the principal thing in which I am obliged, till I receive farther conviction, to differ from many others, is, whether the Son and Spirit have a communicated or derived personality. This many assert, but, I think, without sufficient proof ; for I cannot but conclude that the divine personality, not only of the Father, but of the Son and Spirit, is as much independent and underived, as the divine essence.

We have thus considered how some have embarrassed this doctrine, by being too nice in their inquiries about it. We shall now proceed to consider how others have done prejudice to it, by pretending to explain it ; and how, when they make use of similitudes for that purpose, they have rather prejudiced its enemies, than given any conviction to them. I shall mention only what I have found in the writings of some whom, in other respects, I cannot but exceedingly value, as having deserved well of the church of God, in defending this truth with good success. Yet when they take this method to explain this doctrine, they have, to say the best of it, done but little service to the cause which they have maintained. We find them, for example, expressing themselves to this effect:—The soul of man sometimes reflects on itself, and considers its own nature, powers, and faculties, or is conversant about itself as its object, and then it produces an idea which contains the moral image of itself, and is as when a man sees his face in a glass, and beholds the image of himself ; so, in the eternal generation of the Son, God, beholding himself or his divine perfections, begets an image of himself, or has an eternal idea of his own perfections in his mind, which is called his internal word, as opposed to the word spoken, which is external. By this illustration they set forth the generation of the Son ; and allege that for this reason, or as the wax expresses the character or mark of the seal that is impressed on it, he is called, ‘The brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.’<sup>z</sup> Again, they say, that there is a mutual love between the Father and the Son, which brings forth a third Person, or Subsistence, in the Godhead, namely, the Holy Ghost. There is in the divine essence, they say, an infinite understanding reflecting on itself, whereby it begets a Son, as was before observed, and an infinite will, which leads him to reflect on himself with love and delight, as the chief good, whereby he brings forth a third Person in the Godhead, namely, the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, they describe this divine Person, as being the result of the mutual joy and delight that there is between the Father and the Son. These explications many are at a loss to understand. We humbly conceive it would be much better to let them alone, and to confess this doctrine to be an inexplicable mystery ; or else some other way

may be found out, less liable to exception, for explaining those scriptures which speak of the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost.

### *The Sonship of Christ.*

The scriptures generally brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son are various. A principal one is that in which the Father is represented as saying to him, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee;'<sup>a</sup> that is, say they, 'I have, in my eternal, unsuccessive duration, communicated, or imparted, the divine essence, or, at least, personality to thee.' Another scripture brought for this purpose, is this: 'The Lord possessed me,' speaking of his eternal Word, or Son, 'in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.'<sup>b</sup> In this passage, they suppose that God's possessing him, which is certainly to be taken in a different sense from his being the possessor of all creatures, is to be understood of his being God's proper Son by nature; and his being said to be 'brought forth,' they suppose, proves his eternal generation. Another scripture brought for the same purpose, is that in which it is said of the Son, 'His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.'<sup>c</sup> From these words they attempt to prove his being begotten in the divine essence. But how that can be called his 'going forth,' I do not well understand. Moreover, they adduce the scripture before-mentioned: 'Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;'<sup>d</sup> and the parallel scripture: 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature;'<sup>e</sup> where, by 'first-born,' they understand, that he was begotten before all worlds,—the divine essence, or, at least, personality, being communicated to him from eternity. Another scripture, before referred to, is brought to prove this doctrine: 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;'<sup>f</sup> that is, say some, 'As the Father hath all divine perfections in himself originally, so the Son hath these perfections by communication from him,'—which they suppose to be not an arbitrary, but a necessary donation. Again, they adduce the texts where he is said to be 'the only-begotten of the Father,' and 'the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.'<sup>g</sup> From the former of these, they prove the eternal generation of the Son; and from the latter, his being begotten in the divine essence, which distinguishes it from all finite productions, which are out of himself. There are also many other scriptures that speak of our Saviour as the Son of God; particularly those in which he is called, 'the Son of the living God,'<sup>h</sup> 'his beloved Son,'<sup>i</sup> 'his own Son,' *ἰδιος υἱος*,<sup>k</sup> which some render, 'his proper Son,' that is, his Son, not only as having the same divine nature with himself, but as implying the manner of its communication.

These are the scriptures which are generally brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son. But we shall take occasion to inquire whether there may not be another sense given of them, which is less liable to exception, as well as more intelligible. It is to be owned that they contain some of the deep things of God; and therefore it is no wonder if they are reckoned among those scriptures that are hard to be understood. But so far as I have any light, either from the context of the respective scriptures, or from the analogy of faith, I cannot but conclude that those I have mentioned, and all others of a similar nature, which are brought to prove the eternal generation or sonship of Christ, respect him as God-man, Mediator. Here we shall consider these scriptures; and then answer some objections that may be brought against our sense of them. And in what we shall say, it will, I hope, appear, that, without being tenacious of those modes of speaking which have the sanction of venerable antiquity, and are supported by the reputation of those who have used them, we assert nothing but what tends to the glory of the Son and Spirit, establishes the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and agrees with the commonly received faith, so far as it is founded on scripture.

a Psal. ii. 7.

b Prov. viii. 22, 23, 25.

c Mic. v. 2.

d Heb. i. 3.

e Col. i. 15.

f John v. 26.

g John i. xiv. 18.

h Matt. xvi. 16.

i Matt. iii. 17.

k Rom. viii. 2.



The first scripture before-mentioned, which was brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son, was this, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.'<sup>a</sup> That this cannot respect the communication of the divine nature or personality to the Son, appears, as I humbly conceive, from the words immediately foregoing, 'I will declare the decree,' or what I had before decreed or determined. Far be it from us to suppose that the divine nature or personality of the Son, was the result of an act of the divine will. Indeed, the whole Psalm plainly speaks of Christ as Mediator. As such he is said, to be 'set as God's King on his holy hill of Sion';<sup>b</sup> and, as such, he is said to intercede, or ask of God; and, as the result of this, the Father is said, to 'give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.'<sup>c</sup> All this is spoken of him, as a farther explication of those words: 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' The apostle refers to this scripture when speaking of him as Mediator, he describes him as 'having, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than the angels';<sup>d</sup> which he has done, as he is constituted heir of all things. The apostle subjoins the promise, 'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;' that is, 'He shall perform that obedience which is due from him as a Son; and I will give unto him those rewards which are due from a Father, who has committed this work to him, with a promise of conferring those revenues of mediatorial glory on him, which should ensue on his fulfilling it.' Moreover, this scripture is referred to by the apostle, when he says, that 'the promise, which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.'<sup>e</sup> It is plain from this, that the psalmist speaks of him as having finished his work of redemption; at the time of his doing which, he was raised from the dead; and then, in the fullest sense, he had 'the heathen for his inheritance.' On this account, he is also called, 'The first-begotten of the dead,'<sup>f</sup> and, 'The first-born from the dead.'<sup>g</sup>

The next scripture<sup>h</sup> brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son, refers to Christ as Mediator. When God is said to 'possess him in the beginning of his way,' the meaning is, that in his eternal design of grace relating to the redemption of man, the Father possessed or laid claim to him as his Son, or Servant, appointed in the human nature, to bring about that great work. Accordingly it follows, 'I was set up from everlasting;' that is, fore-ordained of God, to be the Mediator and Head of his elect. This agrees very well with what follows: 'I was daily his delight;' that is, God the Father was well-pleased with him, when foreseeing, from all eternity, what he would do in time, to secure the glory of his perfections in the redemption of man; just as he publicly testified his well-pleasedness in him, when he was actually engaged in this work. It is farther added, that 'he was always rejoicing before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.' This signifies the great pleasure Christ had in his eternal foresight of what he would do for the sons of men, whom he is elsewhere said to have 'loved with an everlasting love.'

The next scripture is in Micah v. 2, where, speaking of the Son, it is said, 'Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.' For understanding this let us consider that God's goings are sometimes taken in scripture for what he does, whereby he renders himself the object of his people's astonishment and praise. These are his visible goings. Thus, 'They have seen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary';<sup>i</sup> that is, they shall see the great things, which thou wilt do for man, in the work of redemption. So in the passage in Micah, we read of Christ's goings forth, his invisible goings, as we may call them, or his secret purposes, or designs of grace, relating to the redemption of his people. 'His goings forth were from everlasting;' that is, he did, from eternity, design to save them; the outgoings of his heart were towards them; and, as the result of this, he came into the world, and was born in Bethlehem, according to this prediction.

The next scripture is in Heb. i. 3, where he is said to be 'the brightness of his,'

a Ps. ii. 7.

b Ver. 6.

c Ver. 8.

d Heb. i. 5.

e Acts xiii. 32, 33.

f Rev. i. 5.

g Col. i. 18.

h Prov. viii. 22, 23, 25.

i Psal. lxxviii. 24.



that is, his Father's 'glory, and the express image of his Person.' By the former expression, I humbly conceive, is meant, that the glory of the divine perfections shines forth most illustriously in Christ, our great Mediator; as the apostle expresses it elsewhere, 'God hath shined in our hearts, to give the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.'<sup>a</sup> By the latter expression, in which Christ is called 'the express image of his Person,' I humbly conceive is meant, that, though his divine nature is the same as the Father's, yet his personality is distinct. Accordingly, it is not said to be the same, but 'the image' of his Father's. The passage proves also his proper divine personality, or shows it to be, in all respects, like that of the Father, though not the same.

The next scripture is in John v. 26. 'As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' We cannot think that the Father's having 'given to the Son to have life in himself,' implies his giving him the divine perfections; for the propriety of that mode of speaking cannot be defended consistently with his proper underived deity. I humbly conceive, that the meaning of it is, that 'as the Father hath life in himself,' that is, as he has, at his own disposal, eternal life, or all that fulness of grace and glory which his people are to be made partakers of, and has designed to give it in his eternal purpose; so hath he given to the Son, as Mediator, to have life in himself, that is, that, as such, he should be the treasury of all this grace, and that he should have life in himself to dispense to them. This is very agreeable to his character and office, as Mediator; and to the words which follow: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life;<sup>b</sup> and 'He,' namely, the Father, 'hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.'<sup>c</sup> These words plainly denote, that the life which he has received from the Father, is that eternal life which he, as Mediator, is empowered or commissioned to bestow on his people. This he has in himself. Accordingly he is said to be 'full of grace and truth;<sup>d</sup> and it is elsewhere said, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.'<sup>e</sup>

The next thing to be considered, is the sense of the many scriptures in which our Saviour is described as 'the Son of God,' 'the Son of the living God,' 'his only begotten Son,' 'his own or proper Son,' as distinguished from all others. These names, I humbly conceive, set forth his glory, as Mediator; and this we shall endeavour to prove. But, to prepare our way for the prosecution of the argument, as well as to prevent any misconception which might prejudice it, we shall premise a few remarks. 1. When we read of the Son of God as dependent on the Father, inferior and obedient to him, and yet as being equal with him, and having the same divine nature, we cannot conceive of any character which answers to all these ideas of sonship, except that of Mediator. If we consider the properties of sonship among men, every one who stands in this relation to a father, is dependent on him. In this respect, the father is the cause of his son. Sonship is not like any other production; for no effect can, properly speaking, be called a son, but that which hath the same kind of nature with his father. The relation of sonship also, always implies inferiority, and an obligation to yield obedience. I do not apply this, in every respect, to the sonship of Christ; which no similitude, taken from mere creatures, can sufficiently illustrate. His character, as Mediator, however, seems to answer to it, more than any thing else than can be said of him; since he has, as such, the same individual nature with the Father, and also is inferior to, and dependent on him. As a son, among men, is inferior to, and dependent on, his father, and as the prophet says, 'honoureth his father;<sup>f</sup> so whatever Christ is as Mediator, he receives it from the Father, and, in all that he does, as he himself says, he 'honoureth his Father.'<sup>g</sup> As the whole work of redemption is referred to the Father's glory, and the commission by which the Son acts as Mediator is received from the Father; so, as a Son, he refers all the glory of it to him. 2. This account of Christ's sonship does not take away any argument by which we prove his deity. When we consider

a 2 Cor. iv. 6.  
f Mal. i. 6.

b Ver. 24.  
g John viii. 49.

c Ver. 27.

d John i. 14.

e Col. i. 19.

him as Mediator, or speak of the person of Christ as such, we always suppose him to be both God and man ; so that, as God, he is equal with the Father, and has an equal right to divine adoration. This belongs to him as much when considered as Mediator, as it can be supposed to do if we consider his sonship in any other respect. 3. Our account of Christ's sonship does not take away any argument to prove his distinct personality from the Father and Holy Ghost. If it sets aside that which is taken from the dependence of his personality on the Father, as received from him by communication, it substitutes another in the room of it. To be a Mediator, is, without doubt, a personal character ; and because neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost can be said to be Mediators, it implies that his personality is distinct from theirs. Likewise his acting as Mediator from the Father, and the Holy Spirit's securing the glory which arises to him from hence, and applying the redemption purchased by him, are a farther proof of the distinction of the Persons in the Godhead. 4. While we consider the Mediator as both God and man, in one Person, we do not suppose that his mediatorial character respects either of his two natures considered separately. It does not so respect his divine nature. It is true, his having the same nature with the Father, might be reckoned by some a character of sonship ; as it contains one ingredient in the common idea which we have of sonship among men. They, as sons, are said to have the same kind of nature as their fathers. So our Saviour's having the same individual nature with the Father, might give occasion to some to denominate him his Son. But though this may be the foundation of his being called God's 'proper Son,' *ἰδιος υἱός*, yet it is not his distinguishing character as a Son. For it would follow, that the Holy Ghost, who has the same nature with the Father, would, for the same reason, be called his Son. But this is contrary to the scripture account given of him, as proceeding from the Father and the Son. Again, the character of Christ as God-man, Mediator, does not respect his human nature, considered separately from his divine, nor any of those peculiar honours conferred upon it beyond what any mere creatures are made partakers of.

This leads us to consider the difference between our view of his sonship, and that which was generally entertained by the Socinians. These, for the most part, speak of Christ as being denominated the Son of God, on account of the extraordinary and miraculous conception, or formation, of his human nature in the womb of the Virgin. For this they refer to that scripture : 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'<sup>a</sup> The sense in which they understand this text, is, that Christ is called the Son of God on account of this extraordinary event. We cannot think, however, that a miraculous production is a sufficient foundation to support this character, and must conclude that the glory of Christ's sonship is infinitely greater than what arises thence. I humbly conceive, that that scripture is to be understood, with a small variation of the translation, thus, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c. because that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called,' as he really is, 'the Son of God ;' that is, 'He is, as Mediator, an extraordinary Person appointed to execute a glorious office, the Godhead and the manhood being to be united, on which account he is called the Son of God ; and it is therefore expedient that the formation of his human nature should be in an extraordinary way, namely, by the power of the Holy Ghost.' Again, the Socinians suppose that his being called the Son of God, refers only to some dignities conferred upon one whom they suppose to be no more than a man. This is infinitely below the glory which we ascribe to him as Mediator. Their idea of him, as the Son of God, how extraordinary soever his conception was, argues him to be no more than a creature ; but ours, as has been before observed, proves him a divine Person, since we never speak of him as Mediator, without including both natures.

Having premised these things, to explain our sense of Christ's being called the Son of God, as Mediator, we proceed to prove our view from scripture. Here we are not under a necessity of straining the sense of a few scriptures, to make them

<sup>a</sup> Luke i. 35.



speak agreeably to our notion of Christ's sonship. I think the whole scripture, whenever it speaks of Christ as the Son of God, gives countenance to it. I cannot find one place in the New Testament, in which Christ is called the Son of God, without sufficient evidence appearing in the context, that he is so called as Mediator. Thus Peter's confession, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,'<sup>c</sup> speaks of him as Christ, or the Mediator, that is, as the person who was invested in the office, and came to perform the work, of a Mediator; and as such it calls him, 'the Son of the living God.' So when the High Priest asked our Saviour, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?'<sup>d</sup> his question means, Art thou the Messiah, as thou art supposed to be by thy followers? Our Saviour replied to him, 'Thou hast said;'<sup>e</sup> that is, It is as thou hast said; and then he describes himself in another character, by which he is often represented, namely, as Mediator, and speaks of the highest degree of his mediatorial glory to which he shall be advanced at his second coming: 'Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'<sup>f</sup> Doubtless, the centurion, also, and they who were with him, when they confessed that 'he was the Son of God,'<sup>g</sup> understood by the phrase, that he was the Messiah, or the Christ; which is a character by which he was most known, and which had been supported by so many miracles, and was now confirmed by the miracle of the earthquake which gave them conviction. Again, when the devils are represented as crying out, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of God,'<sup>h</sup> it is added, that 'they knew that he was Christ;' so that the commonly received notion of our Saviour's sonship, was, that he was the Christ. Further, when Jesus says, concerning Lazarus, that 'his sickness was not unto death,' that is, not such as that he should continue in the state of the dead, 'but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby;'<sup>i</sup> the meaning is, that he might give a proof of his being the Christ, by raising him from the dead. Hence, when he speaks to Martha, with a design to try whether she believed he could raise her brother from the dead, and represents himself to her as the object of faith, she replies, 'I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.'<sup>k</sup> Again, it is said, that Saul, when converted, 'preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God;'<sup>l</sup> that is, he proved him to be the Messiah. Accordingly, when he was establishing the same doctrine, it is said, that 'he proved that he was the very Christ.'<sup>m</sup>

Moreover, our Saviour is described in scripture as executing some of his mediatorial offices, or as having received a commission to execute them from the Father, or as having some branches of mediatorial glory conferred upon him, at the same time that he is called the Son of God; and this affords us ground to conclude that the view we have given is the true import of his sonship. Thus it is said, 'We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.'<sup>n</sup> John the Baptist also gives a public testimony to him, as sustaining a character which belongs to him as Mediator, when he says, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;'<sup>o</sup> and afterwards, referring to the same character, he says, 'I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.'<sup>p</sup> At another time, he gives a noble testimony to him, as God-man, Mediator, when he calls him, 'The Bridegroom which hath the bride,' that is, who is related to, and has a propriety in, his church; and adds, that 'he testifies what he has seen and heard,' and that it is 'he whom God hath sent, who speaks the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;'<sup>q</sup> and then, as a farther explication, he says, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.'<sup>r</sup> This is, in effect, the same as when Christ is called elsewhere, 'his beloved Son.' Again, Christ is said to be 'a Son over his own house, whose house are we;'<sup>s</sup> which denotes, not only his propriety in his church, but his being the Head of it as Mediator. The apostle farther speaks of him as 'the Son of God, whom we are to wait for from heaven; whom he has raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come;'<sup>t</sup> as the Son of God, 'who loved him, and gave himself for

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xvi. 16.    <sup>d</sup> Matt. xxvi. 63.    <sup>e</sup> Ver. 64.    <sup>f</sup> Ver. 64.    <sup>g</sup> Matt. xxvii. 54.  
<sup>h</sup> Luke iv. 41.    <sup>i</sup> John xi. 4.    <sup>k</sup> Ver. 27.    <sup>l</sup> Acts ix. 20.    <sup>m</sup> Ver. 22.    <sup>n</sup> Heb. iv. 14.  
<sup>o</sup> John i. 29.    <sup>p</sup> Ver. 34.    <sup>q</sup> John iii. 29, &c.    <sup>r</sup> Ver. 35.    <sup>s</sup> Heb. iii. 6.    <sup>t</sup> 1 Thess. i. 10.



him;<sup>u</sup> as 'God's dear Son,' and, at the same time, as having 'a kingdom,' into which his people are 'translated';<sup>x</sup> and as the Person 'in whom we have redemption through his blood, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.'<sup>y</sup> This last passage seems to be taken in the same sense as that in which he is said to have been 'appointed heir of all things,'<sup>z</sup> and so refers to him as God-man, Mediator.

Farther, when he is considered as a Son, related to his Father, he appears from the context to be viewed as Mediator. Thus, he says, 'I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God';<sup>a</sup> that is, 'My Father, by whom I am constituted Mediator; and your Father, namely, the God who loves you for my sake: he is first my God, as he has honoured, loved, and glorified me; and then your God, as he is reconciled to you for my sake.' So the apostle says, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.'<sup>b</sup>

It may be objected that, in these scriptures, and others of a similar nature, there are two ideas,—namely, one of our Saviour as the Son of God by eternal generation, the other of him as Mediator. We answer, that if Christ's sonship, in the sense in which it is generally explained, were sufficiently proved from other scriptures which take no notice of his mediatorial character or works, or could be accounted for without being liable to the difficulties before-mentioned, and if his character, as Mediator, did not contain in it an idea of personality, the objection would have more weight than otherwise it seems to have.

It is farther objected that, as 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,'<sup>c</sup> he was the Son of God before he was sent into the world, or made of a woman, and under the law,—that is, he was the Son by eternal generation. The answer I would give to this objection is, that it is not necessary to suppose that Christ had the character of a Son before he was sent, though he had that of a divine person. The words may, without any strain or force upon the sense, be understood thus: 'When the fulness of time was come, in which the Messiah was expected, God sent him forth, or sent him into the world, with the character of a Son, at which time he was made of a woman, made under the law, in order that he might redeem them that were under the law.' But even if we suppose that Christ had the character of a Son before he was sent into the world, it will not overthrow our argument. He was, by the Father's designation, an eternal Mediator, and, in this respect, God's eternal Son. He, therefore, who before was so by virtue of the eternal decree, is now actually sent, that he might be and do, what he was, from all eternity, designed to be and do. He was set up from everlasting, or appointed to be the Son of God; and now he is sent to perform the work which this character implies.

It is objected again, that his sonship is apparent from his being Mediator; inasmuch as it is said, 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.'<sup>d</sup> It cannot, it is alleged, be said, in propriety of speech, though he were Mediator, yet he learned obedience; since he was under an obligation to obey and suffer as Mediator. The meaning, therefore, must be, though he were a Son by eternal generation, yet he condescended to put himself into such a capacity, as that he was obliged to obey, and suffer, as Mediator. The stress of this objection lies on the word which we render 'though.' But the passage, *Kai ηγε αυ νιος*, &c., may be rendered, with a small variation, 'Though, being a Son, he learned obedience by the things he suffered; but being made perfect,' that is, after his sufferings, 'he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' This translation takes away the force of the objection. I see no absurdity, however, if it be rendered, as in the vulgar Latin version, 'And, indeed, being a Son, he learned obedience.'<sup>e</sup> The passage, then, proves the argument we are endeavouring

u Gal. ii. 20.

a John xx. 17.

x Col. i. 13.

b 2 Cor. i. 3.

y Col. i. 14.

c Gal. iv. 4.

z Heb. i. 2.

d Heb. v. 8.

e *Kai ηγε* is used six times in the New Testament. In two or three places it might be rendered, without deviating from the sense of the respective texts, *et quidem*, as well as *quoniam*. I see no reason why the enclitic particle *ηγε*, being added to *και*, should always, without exception, alter the sense of it, any more than when it is joined to *ως*, *εαν*, or *ου*. And whereas I render *και* in ver. 9, 'but,' instead of 'and,' that may be justified by several scriptures, where it is so rendered; as Luke vii. 35; Matt. xii. 39; Acts x. 28; 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

to defend, as if it said, It is agreeable to the character of a Son to learn obedience ; it was with this view that the character was conferred upon him ; and, in performing obedience and suffering as Mediator, and thereby securing the glory of the divine perfections in bringing about the work of our redemption, he acted in pursuance of that character.

It will be farther objected, that what we have said concerning the sonship of Christ, as referring to his being Mediator, has some consequences which seem derogatory to his person. It will be alleged, in particular, as a consequence from it, that had not man fallen, and stood in need of a Mediator, our Saviour would not have had that character, and therefore would never have been described as the Son of God, or worshipped as such ; that our first parents, while in the state of innocence, knowing nothing of a Mediator, must have known nothing of the sonship of Christ, and therefore could not give him the glory which is the result of it ; and that as God might have prevented the fall of man, or, when fallen, might have refused to recover him by a Mediator, our Saviour might not have been the Son of God, that is, in the sense of a Mediator between God and man. This objection may be very easily answered, and the charge of Christ's mediatorial sonship being derogatory to his glory, removed. We allow that, had not man fallen, our Saviour would not have been a Mediator between God and man. The commonly received notion is true, that his being a Mediator, is, according to the tenor of several scriptures, by divine ordination and appointment. But I see no absurdity in asserting, that his character, as the Son of God, or Mediator, is equally the result of the divine will or decree. This, I hope, if duly considered, will not contain any derogation from his glory, for we farther assert that, though our Saviour would not have sustained this character if man had not fallen, or if God had not designed to bring about the work of redemption by him, yet he would have been no less a distinct Person in the Godhead, but, as such, would have had a right to divine glory. This appears from what was formerly said, as to his personality being equally necessary with his deity ; which, if it be not communicated to him, certainly has not the least appearance of its being the result of the divine will. Indeed, his divine personality is the only foundation of his *right* to be adored ; and not his being invested in an office, which only draws forth or *occasions* our adoration. When we speak of Christ being adored as Mediator, it is his divine personality, included in that character, which renders him the object of adoration, and not his taking the human nature, or being or doing what he was or did, by divine appointment. I question whether they who assert that he had the divine nature or personality communicated to him, will place his right to divine adoration, on its being communicated ; they will place it rather on his having the divine nature or personality abstractedly from his manner of having it. So when we speak of Christ as Mediator, it is his having the divine glory, or personality, included in that character which renders him the object of adoration. Hence, if man had not fallen, and Christ had not been Mediator, he would have had a right to divine glory as a Person in the Godhead. I doubt not but that our first parents, before they fell, had an intimation of his being a divine person, and adored him as such. If, therefore, Christ had not been Mediator, it would follow only, that he would not have had the character of a Son. He would still have had the glory of a divine Person ; for though his sonship be the result of the divine will, his personality is not so. [See note 2 M, page 241.]

### *The Procession of the Holy Spirit.*

Having inquired into the sense of those scriptures which treat of the sonship of Christ, we shall next consider those that are generally brought to prove the procession of the Holy Ghost. The principal of these, are John xiv. 26, xv. 26, and xvi. 7, in which he is said to 'proceed from the Father,' or to be 'sent by the Father in Christ's name,' or to be 'sent by the Son.' When he is said to be 'sent by the Son from the Father,' and 'to proceed from the Father,' they suppose that his 'proceeding from the Father,' signifies the communication of his divine essence,



or, at least, his personality, and that his being 'sent by the Son,' implies that this communication is from him, as well as from the Father. So it is said, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son;<sup>g</sup> and our Saviour says, 'I will send him unto you;' and, 'he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.'<sup>h</sup> These scriptures, if not brought directly to prove this doctrine, are, notwithstanding, supposed sufficient to evince the truth of it; inasmuch as the Son could not send him, if he had not proceeded from him; nor could the Spirit have received that which he shows to the Son's people, if he had not, from all eternity, received his divine essence or personality from him. There is another scripture, brought by some very valuable divines, to prove the Spiration of the Holy Ghost; a term which is used either as supposed to be expressive of the manner of his having his personality as a Spirit, or else as taken from the words of scripture brought to prove it. This scripture is that, in which our Saviour is said to have 'breathed on' his disciples, saying, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'<sup>i</sup> Here the external sign, or symbol, used in the act of conferring him on them in time, is thought to prove his procession from him from eternity; as a temporal procession supposes an eternal one. We shall now inquire whether there may not be another sense given of these scriptures, agreeable to the analogy of faith, that may be acquiesced in by those who cannot so well understand, or account for, the common interpretation. The sense, I humbly conceive, is this: the Spirit is considered, not with respect to the manner of his subsisting, but with respect to the subserviency of his acting, to set forth the Mediator's glory, and that of the Father who sent him. I choose to call it a subserviency of acting, such as does not imply any inferiority in the agent. But if we suppose that it argues any inferiority in the Holy Spirit, this is only an inferiority in acting; the works which he does being subservient to the glory of the Mediator, and of the Father, though his divine personality is, in all respects, equal with theirs. This explication of these texts is allowed by many, if not by most, of those who defend the doctrine of the Trinity, notwithstanding their maintaining the Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son, from all eternity, in the sense before considered. I need only refer to that explication which a great and learned divine gives of these and similar texts, notwithstanding his adhering, in other respects, to the common mode of speaking, as to the eternal generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost. His words are these: "All that discourse which we have of the mission and sending of the Holy Ghost, and his proceeding and coming forth from the Father and Son, for the ends specified, John xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7, 13. concerns not at all the eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and Son, as to his distinct Personality and subsistence, but belongs to that economy, or dispensation of ministry, that the whole Trinity proceedeth in, for the accomplishment of the work of our salvation."<sup>k</sup> Now if these scriptures, which are the chief in all the New Testament on which this doctrine is founded, are to be taken in this sense, how shall we find a sufficient proof, from other scriptures, of the procession of the Holy Ghost in any other sense?

*The Economy of the Persons in the Godhead.*

That we may farther explain this doctrine, let us consider, that whatever the Son, as Mediator, has purchased, as being sent by the Father for that end, is applied by the Holy Ghost, who therefore acts in subserviency to them. This is generally called, by divines, 'the Economy of the Persons in the Godhead.' As this phrase is often used when we consider the distinct works of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in their respective subserviency to one another, we shall take occasion briefly to explain it, and shall show how it may be applied to them, without inferring any inferiority as to what concerns their personal glory. We shall say nothing concerning the derivation or use of the word 'economy;' though we cannot forbear to mention, with indignation, the sense which some of the opposers of the blessed Trinity have given it. Laying aside all the observances of decency and reverence, which this sacred mystery calls for, they represent us, as speaking of the family

g Gal. iv. 6. h John xvi. 7, 14. i John xx. 22. k See Dr. Owen against Biddle, p. 362



government of the divine Persons. This is the most invidious sense they could put upon the word, and most remote from our design in the use of it. A few considerations will explain it and apply it to our present purpose.

All those works, which are the effects of the divine power, or sovereign will, are performed by all the Persons in the Godhead, and attributed to them in scripture. The reason of this is very evident,—the power and will of God, and all other divine perfections, belong equally, and alike, to the Father, Son, and Spirit. If, then, that which produces the effects, belongs to them, the effects produced must be equally ascribed to them. Hence the Father is no more said to create and govern the world, or to be the Author of all grace, and the Fountain of blessedness, than the Son and Spirit. Yet since the Father, Son, and Spirit, are distinct Persons, and so have distinct personal considerations in acting, it is necessary that their personal glory should be demonstrated, or made known to us, that our faith and worship may be fixed on, and directed to them, in a distinct manner. But this distinction of the Persons in the Godhead cannot be known, as their eternal power or deity is said to be, by the works of creation and providence, it being a doctrine of pure revelation. We are therefore given to understand, in scripture, when it treats of the great work of our salvation, that that work is attributed, first to the Father,—then to the Son, as Mediator, receiving a commission from him to redeem and save his people,—and then to the Holy Ghost, acting in subserviency to the Mediator's commission. This is what we are to understand when we speak of the distinct economy of the Father, Son, and Spirit. I cannot better express it than by considering it as a divine determination, that the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, should be demonstrated in such a way.

I shall now give instances of the economy of divine persons, in some particular acts or works. When a divine Person is represented in scripture as doing, or determining to do, any thing relating to the work of our redemption or salvation, by another divine Person, who must, for that reason, be considered in the matter as Mediator, it is to be understood in the economic sense, of the Father. By this means it is that he declares, or demonstrates, his personal glory. Thus it is said, 'He,' that is the Father, 'hath chosen us in him,' namely, in the Son; it is also said, 'He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.'<sup>1</sup> Though election and predestination are applied also to the Son and Spirit, when they have a reference to the demonstration of their personal glory, yet, in this place, they are applied only to the Father. There are several other scriptures, in which things done are, for the same reason, particularly ascribed to the Father. Thus, it is said, 'God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;' and 'He was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;'<sup>m</sup> and, 'Of him,' namely, the Father, 'are ye in Christ Jesus, who, of God,' that is, the Father, 'is made unto us wisdom,' &c.<sup>n</sup> In these and several other scriptures to the same purpose, the Father is, in a peculiar manner, intended; because he is considered, as no other divine Person is, as acting by the Mediator, or as glorifying the perfections of the divine nature which belong to him, by what this great Mediator did by his appointment.

Further, when a divine Person is considered as acting in subserviency to the Father's glory, or executing a commission which he had received from him, relating to the work of redemption, and accordingly performing any act of obedience in a human nature assumed by him for that purpose, this is peculiarly applied to the Son's personal character, and designed to demonstrate it, as belonging to no other Person in the Godhead. Of this, we have several instances in scripture. Thus, though to judge the world is a branch of the divine glory which is common to all the Persons in the Godhead, yet there are some circumstances in the character of a divine Person in particular, who is denominated as Judge of quick and dead, that are applicable to none but the Son. So we are to understand that scripture, 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son';<sup>o</sup> that is, the Son is the only Person in the Godhead who displays his mediatorial character and glory, as the Judge of the whole world. Yet when there is another personal character ascribed to God, as when he is called 'the Judge of all,' or

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 4, 5.<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.<sup>o</sup> John v. 22.

when he is said to 'judge the world in righteousness, by that Man,' namely, our Lord Jesus, 'whom he hath ordained,'<sup>p</sup> this personal character determines that it belongs to him in particular. Again, to give eternal life is a divine prerogative, and consequently belongs to all the Persons in the Godhead. Yet when a divine Person is said to give eternal life to a people that were given to him for that purpose, and to have received power, or authority, from another, to confer this privilege as Mediator, it is peculiarly applied to the Son. Thus, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'<sup>q</sup>

Moreover, when a divine Person is said to do anything in subserviency to the Mediator, it is to be understood peculiarly of the Spirit. Thus it is said, 'He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.'<sup>r</sup> So when he is said to give his testimony to the mission or work of the Mediator, by any divine works performed by him, or when he is said to sanctify and comfort believers or to seal and confirm them unto the day of redemption, the things done are to be ascribed peculiarly to the Spirit. Though, as divine works, they are applicable to all the Persons in the Godhead; yet when he is said to perform them in a way of subserviency to Christ, as having purchased them, his distinct personal character as displayed in them is demonstrated, and the works are more especially applied to him. This is what we understand by that peculiar economy, or dispensation, which determines us to give distinct personal glory to each of the Persons in the Godhead.

And now that we are speaking of the Spirit, considered as acting so as to set forth his personal glory, we may observe that, in accordance with this way of speaking, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, are, by a metonymy, called 'the Spirit.' Thus, it is said, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost? They said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.'<sup>s</sup> We are not to understand this passage as though they had not heard whether there were such a Person as the Holy Ghost. What they had not heard was that there was such an extraordinary dispensation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred on men. Again, it is said, 'the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'<sup>t</sup> The word 'given' being here supplied in our translation, and not found in the original, the passage ought rather to be rendered, 'the Holy Ghost was not as yet;' by which we are to understand the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and not his personality, which was from all eternity. Here we may farther observe, that when the Holy Ghost is spoken of as a Person, the word which denotes his personality, ought to be rendered, not 'It,' but 'He,' as expressive of his personal character; and when it is taken in a figurative sense, for the gifts or graces of the Spirit, then it should be translated 'It.' This rule is sometimes observed. In John xvi. 13, it is said of the Spirit, 'He will guide you into all truth;' where the personal character of the Spirit is expressly mentioned, as it ought to be. The rule, however, is not duly observed in every scripture. Thus, the words, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness,'<sup>u</sup> ought to have been rendered, 'The Spirit himself;' [See Note 2 N, page 250.] as also the passage, 'the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.'<sup>x</sup> The same rule ought to be observed in all other scriptures; so that we may be led to put a just difference between the Spirit, considered as a divine Person, or as producing those effects which are said to be wrought by him.

What I have said, in attempting to explain those scriptures that treat of the Person of Christ, as God-man, Mediator, and of his inferiority, in that respect, or as he is said to sustain that character, to the Father, and those which speak of the subserviency of the Spirit, in acting to the Father and the Son,—does not, as I apprehend, run counter to the common faith of those who have defended the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. I hope, therefore, that when I call one the sonship of Christ, and the other the procession of the Holy Ghost, what I teach will not be deemed a new and strange doctrine. I cannot but persuade myself, that what I have said concerning the Mediator as acting in obedience to the

p Acts xvii. 31.

t John vii. 39.

q John xvii. 2.

u Rom. viii. 16.

r John xvi. 14.

x Verse 26.

s Acts xix. 2.

Father, and concerning the Spirit as acting in subserviency to the Mediator, will not be contested by those who defend the doctrine of the Trinity. If I have a little varied from the common way of speaking, I hope none will be offended at the acceptance of a word; especially as I have endeavoured to defend my sense of it, by referring to many scriptures. If I cannot acquiesce in the common explication of the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, I am well satisfied I do no more than what many Christians do, who have received the doctrine of the Trinity from the scripture, and are unacquainted with those modes of speaking which are used in the schools. These appear as much to dislike them, as any other can do, when used in public discourses about this doctrine.

*Proofs of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

We shall now proceed to consider, under four general heads of argument, the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as maintained in one of the answers we are explaining. We shall consider it, from those divine names which are given to them, that are peculiar to God alone; from their having the divine attributes ascribed to them, and consequently the divine nature; from their having manifested their divine glory, by those works that none but God can perform; and from their having a right to divine worship, which none but God is worthy to receive. If these things be made to appear, we have all that we need contend for; and it will be evident that the Son and Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father. These heads of argument we shall consider first in reference to the Son.

*Proofs of the Deity of Christ from his Titles.*

I. That the Son is God equal with the Father appears from those divine names given to him that are peculiar to God alone.

Here we shall premise something concerning the use of names given to persons, together with the design of them. Names are given to persons, as well as things, with a twofold design. Sometimes nothing is intended by them but to distinguish one object from another. In this sense the names are not in themselves significant, or expressive of any property, or quality, in what they describe. Thus most, though not all, of those names we read of in scripture, are designed only to distinguish one man from another; and this is the most common use and design of names. On the other hand, they are sometimes given to signify some property in those to whom they are applied, such as what they should be or do. We have many instances in scripture, of persons called by names, which have had some special signification annexed to them, assigned as a reason of their being given. Thus Adam had his name given him, because made of earth; and Eve, because she was the mother of all living. The same may be said concerning Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and several others; whose respective names have a signification annexed to them, agreeable to the proper sense of the words, and the design of their being given. As regards our present purpose, we may conclude, that when names are given to any divine Person, they are designed to express some excellency and perfection belonging to him. We shall, therefore, have sufficient reason to conclude the Son to be a divine Person, if we can make it appear that he has those names given to him in scripture, which are proper to God alone.

The name 'Jehovah,' which is peculiar to God, is given to him.

Here we shall first prove that the name 'Jehovah' is peculiar to God, and that he is distinguished by it from all creatures. It is said, 'I am the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another;' or, as the text may be rendered, 'I am Jehovah, that name of mine, and my glory,' which is signified thereby, 'will I not give to another.' It follows, that this is an incommunicable name of God. When he says, 'I will not give it to another,' he declares that it necessarily belongs to him. He cannot, therefore, give it to another; for



that would be unbecoming himself. Hence, this name, which is expressive of his glory in so peculiar a manner, is never given to any creature. There are other scriptures in which the name 'Jehovah' is represented as peculiar to God. Thus when the prophet Amos had been speaking of the glory of God, as displayed in the works of creation and providence, he adds, that 'the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'is his name.'<sup>z</sup> So that those works, which are peculiar to God, might as well be applied to creatures, as the name 'Jehovah,' which is equally peculiar. The same prophet gives another magnificent description of God, with respect to those works that are peculiar to him, when he says, 'It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth;' and then he adds, 'the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'is his name.'<sup>a</sup> Again, it is said, 'that men may know, that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.'<sup>b</sup> This is never said of any other divine names; which are, in a limited sense, sometimes given to creatures. Indeed, all creatures are expressly excluded from having a right to this name.

There are scriptures in which the name 'Jehovah' is applied to God, and an explication of it subjoined which argues that it is peculiar to him. When Moses desired of God, that he would let him know what 'his name' was, for the encouragement of the faith of the Israelites to whom he sent him,<sup>c</sup> the meaning is, he desires to know what are those divine glories which would render him the object of faith and worship, or how he might so describe him to the children of Israel, as to elicit from them the reverence and regard which were due to the great God, who sent him about so important an errand. In answer to this, God says, 'I AM THAT I AM.' 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.'<sup>d</sup> This description sets forth, not one single perfection, but all the perfections of the divine nature; as though he had said, 'I am a God of infinite perfection.' And then he adds, 'Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, The Lord,' or Jehovah, 'the God of your fathers, hath sent me unto you;' where 'Jehovah' signifies the same as 'I AM THAT I AM.' He further adds, 'This is my memorial unto all generations.' This glorious name, therefore, is certainly peculiar to God.

What has been already observed is sufficient to prove that the name 'Jehovah' is proper to God only. We might add another argument of less weight; which, though we do not lay a stress upon it as if it were of itself sufficient proof, may not improperly be mentioned in connection with what has been already suggested. It is, that the word 'Jehovah' has no plural number, as being never designed to signify any more than the one God; neither has it any emphatical particle affixed to it, as other words in the Hebrew language have. Several of the other names of God are sometimes applied to others, and are made to designate him, as distinguished from them, by means of an emphatic particle. Now, the reason why the name 'Jehovah' has not such a particle is, that it is never given to any creature.

As the Jews best understood their own language, they may, in some respects, be depended on, as to the sense they give of the word 'Jehovah.' It is certain they paid the greatest regard to this name, even to superstition. Accordingly, they would never pronounce it; but, instead of it, used some expressions by which they described it. Sometimes they call it, 'that name,' or 'that glorious name,' or 'that name that is not to be expressed.'<sup>e</sup> By this they mean, as Josephus says,<sup>f</sup> that it was not lawful for them to utter it, or, indeed, to write it. If any one presumed to do this, they reckoned him guilty not only of profaneness, in an uncommon degree, but even of blasphemy. The name is, therefore, never found in any writings of human composition among them. The modern Jews, indeed, are not much to be regarded, as retaining the same veneration for this name. Yet Onkelos, the author of the Chaldee paraphrase on some parts of scripture, who lived about fifty years after our Saviour's time, and Jonathan Ben-Uzziel, who is supposed to have lived as many years before it, never insert it in their writings; and, doubtless, they

z Amos v. 8.

d Ver. 14.

a Chap. ix. 6.

e Ονομα ανικηνητον.

b Psal. lxxxiii. 18.

f Antiq. lib. iii. chap. 5.

c Exod. iii. 13

were not the first that entertained these sentiments about it, but had other writings then extant, which gave sanction to their practice. Some critics conclude, from Jewish writers, that the name was never pronounced, even in the earliest ages of the church, except by the high-priest; and that when he was obliged, by the divine law, to pronounce it, in the form of benediction, the people always expressed an uncommon degree of reverence, either by bowing or prostration. This, however, is not supported by sufficient evidence. Others think the great veneration for it took its rise soon after their return from captivity, which is more probable. At all events, the reason assigned for it is, that they reckoned it God's incommunicable name. Here I cannot but observe, that the translators of the Greek version of the Old Testament, commonly called the LXX., which, if it be not altogether the same with that mentioned by Aristæus, which was compiled almost three hundred years before the Christian era, is, without doubt, of considerable antiquity, never translate the word 'Jehovah,' but, instead of it, write *Κυριος*, 'Lord';<sup>g</sup> and, even when it seems absurd not to translate it, as when it is said, 'by my name, Jehovah, was I not known,' they render it, 'by my name, the Lord, was I not known.'<sup>h</sup> This practice we have taken occasion to observe, not as supposing it a sufficient proof in itself of the argument we are maintaining, but as it corresponds with the sense of those scriptures before-mentioned, from which it appears that Jehovah is the proper or incommunicable name of God.

It is objected by the Antitrinitarians, that the name 'Jehovah' is sometimes given to creatures, and consequently that it is not God's proper name, nor evinces our Saviour's deity, when given to him. To prove that it is sometimes given to creatures, they refer to several scriptures; as Exod. xvii. 15, where the altar that Moses erected is called 'Jehovah Nissi,' that is, the Lord is my banner; to Judges vi. 24, where another altar that Gideon built is called, 'Jehovah Shalom'; Gen. xxii. 14, where it is said that Abraham called the name of the place in which he was ready to offer Isaac, 'Jehovah Jireh'; and Ezek. xlvi. 35, where it is said that Jerusalem, from that day, should be called, 'Jehovah Shammah.' They add, also, that the ark was called 'Jehovah,' on several occasions, and particularly when it was carried up into the city of David; for it is said, 'The Lord,' that is, Jehovah, 'is gone up with a shout, even the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.'<sup>i</sup> They say, too, the name 'Jehovah' is often, in the Old Testament, given to angels; and is therefore not proper to God only.

When they pretend that the name 'Jehovah' was given to inanimate things, and in particular to altars, as the instance of one being called 'Jehovah Nissi,' it is very unreasonable to suppose that the name and glory of God were put upon them. Had the altar been a symbol of God's presence, it would not have been called by this name; especially in the sense in which our Saviour and the Holy Spirit have it applied to them. The meaning of this scripture, as I apprehend, is nothing but this,—that there was an inscription written on the altar, containing these words, 'Jehovah Nissi,' the design of which was to signify to the faith of those that came to worship there, that the Lord was their banner. The name, strictly speaking, was not given to the altar, but to God. Accordingly, some, not without good reason, render the words, 'He built an altar, and called the name of it the altar of Jehovah Nissi.' The same may be said with respect to the altar erected by Gideon, which was called 'Jehovah Shalom,' or 'the altar of Jehovah Shalom.' It was so called, that all who came to offer sacrifice upon it might be put in mind

<sup>g</sup> This the Holy Ghost has condescended, for what reason I know not, to give countenance to, in all those quotations in the New Testament, where the name Jehovah is referred to from the Old. [See Note 2 O, page 250.]

<sup>h</sup> Exod. vi. 3. In two places, indeed, it is rendered by *Θεος*, God, Gen. iv. 1, and Isa. liv. 13. And there is one place in which some think they attempt a literal translation of it, 2 Sam. i. 12; where, instead of 'the people of the Lord,' they translate the text, *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου*, in which, some think, *τοῦ κυρίου* is put for *τοῦ κυρίου*, or *τοῦ κυρίου*, through the mistake of some amanuensis. It seems, however, to be rather an explication than a literal translation of the words. Some think the reason of this method used by them in their translation is, that the Hebrew letters of which that name consists cannot well be expressed by the letters of the Greek alphabet, so as to compose a word like it. But this does not seem to be the reason of it, for they attempt to translate other names equally difficult: as in Gen. x. 2, *Ιουβαν* for Javan; and 2 Kings xii. 2, *Ιουδαί* for Jehoiaha.

<sup>i</sup> Psal. xlvii. 5.



that God was a God of peace, or would give peace to them. As for the place to which Abraham went to offer Isaac, which is called 'Jehovah Jireh,' it was the mount Moriah; and it is certain that this was not known by the name 'Jehovah Jireh,' or, whenever spoken of, mentioned by that name. Nor had Abraham any right to apply to it any branch of the divine glory, as signified by the name. When, therefore, he called the place 'Jehovah Jireh,' it is as though he had said, 'Let all that travel over this mountain know that the Lord was seen, or that he provided a ram instead of Isaac, who was ready to be offered up; let this place be remarkable, in future ages, for this amazing dispensation of providence; and let them glorify God for what was done here, and take encouragement from it to their faith.' Or we may consider him as having spoken as a prophet, and then the meaning is, 'This place shall be very remarkable in future ages, as it shall be the mount of vision; here Jehovah will eminently appear in his temple, which shall be built in this place.' Or, if you take the words in another sense, namely, 'God will provide,' it is as if he had said, 'As God has provided a ram to be offered instead of Isaac, so he will provide the Lamb of God, who is to take away the sin of the world, which was typified by Isaac's being offered.' The place, therefore, was not really called Jehovah; but Abraham takes occasion, from what was done there, to magnify him who appeared to him and held his hand,—whom alone he calls Jehovah. We may add that, when Jerusalem is called Jehovah Shammah, 'the Lord is there,' the meaning is, that it shall eminently be said, in succeeding ages, of the new Jerusalem, that 'the Lord is there.' The city which was commonly known by the name Jerusalem, is not called Jehovah, as though it had any character of divine glory put upon it. The name, as given to it, simply implies, that the gospel church, which was signified by it, should have the presence of God in an eminent degree; or, as our Saviour promised to his disciples, that 'he would be with them alway, even unto the end of the world,<sup>k</sup> and, in consequence, that 'the gates of hell should not prevail against it.' As for the ark, it was not called Jehovah. The psalmist simply takes occasion, from its being carried up into the city of David with a joyful solemnity and an universal shout, with the sound of a trumpet, to foretell the triumphant and magnificent ascension of our Saviour into heaven, which was typified by the event. Concerning him he says, 'Jehovah is gone up.' He is speaking in a prophetic style,—the present, or time past, being put for the time to come, and his words are as if he had said, 'The Lord, when he has completed the work of redemption on earth, will ascend into heaven, which shall be the cause of universal joy to the church; and then he shall,' as the psalmist farther observes, 'reign over the heathen, and sit on the throne of his holiness.' Again, it does not appear that the ark was called Jehovah, in Exod. xvi. 33, 34. When Aaron is commanded to 'lay the pot full of manna before the testimony,' that is, the ark, he is said to have laid it 'before Jehovah.' But the reason of the expression is this,—God had ordained that the mercy-seat over the ark should be the immediate seat of his residence, whence he would condescend to converse with men. Accordingly he is elsewhere said to 'dwell between the cherubims.' On this account, that which was laid up before the ark, might be said to be laid up before the Lord. But since none are so stupid as to suppose that inanimate things can have the divine perfections belonging to them, the principal thing contended for is, that the ark was called Jehovah, because it was a sign and symbol of the divine presence. And thence they conclude, that the name of God may be applied to a person that has no right to the divine glory, as the sign is called by the name of the thing signified by it. It is to be observed, however, that the ark was not only a sacramental sign of God's presence, for that many other things relating to ceremonial worship were, but it was the seat of his presence. It was therefore the divine Majesty who was called Jehovah, and not the place of his residence; and when he alone to whom the glory was ascribed that is due to his name.

When it is farther objected, that the name Jehovah is often applied to angels, the answer is, that it is never ascribed to any but him who is called, by way of eminence, 'the Angel,' or 'the Messenger of the covenant,' that is, our Saviour.<sup>m</sup> Whenever

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.<sup>l</sup> Chap. xvi. 18.<sup>m</sup> Mal. iii. 1.



it is given to this angel, such glorious things are spoken of him, or such acts of divine worship demanded by and given to him, as argue him to be a divine Person. This will plainly appear, if we consider what the Angel, as he appeared to Moses, says concerning himself, 'I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'<sup>a</sup> It is said, 'Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God;' and it is added, 'The Lord,' or Jehovah, 'said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and I am come down to deliver them,' and 'I will send thee unto Pharaoh.'<sup>o</sup> Then in the following verses, the Angel makes mention of his name, as the great 'Jehovah,' the 'I AM who sent him.' Jacob gives divine worship to this Angel, when he says, 'The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.'<sup>p</sup> I might refer to many other scriptures, where the Angel of the Lord is said to have appeared, in which, from the context, it is evident that he was a divine Person, and not a created angel. The most ancient Jewish writers generally call him 'the Word<sup>q</sup> of the Lord.' It is not denied, however, by the Anti-trinitarians, that the Person who so frequently appeared in the form of an Angel, made use of such expressions as can be applied to none but God; and they say that he personated God, or spake after the manner of his representative, not designing that the glory of the divine perfections should be ascribed to him, but to Jehovah, whom he represented. We reply, that the Angel appearing to Moses, in the scripture before-mentioned, and to several others, doth not signify himself to personate God, as doubtless he ought to have done had he been only his representative, and not a divine person. An ambassador, when he speaks in the name of the king whom he represents, always, when personating him, uses such modes of speaking as may be understood to apply, not to himself, but to him that sent him; and it would be reckoned an affront to him whom he represents, should he give occasion to any to ascribe to himself the honour that belongs to his master. Now there is nothing in those texts which speak of this Angel's appearing, that intimates his disclaiming divine honour, as what belonged, not to him, but to God. Hence we must not suppose that he speaks in such a way as God doth, only as representing him. We read, indeed,<sup>r</sup> of a created Angel appearing to John, who was supposed by him, at the first, to be the same that appeared to the church of old, and accordingly John offered him divine honour; but he refused to receive it, knowing that the character of being the divine representative would not be a sufficient warrant for his receiving it. We must conclude, therefore, that the Angel who appeared to the church of old, and is called Jehovah, was a divine Person. [See Note 2 P, page 250.]

Having considered that the name Jehovah is peculiarly applied to God, we now proceed to prove that it is given to the Son. The first scripture that we shall refer to is Isa. xl. 3, 'The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,' or Jehovah; 'make straight in the desert a highway for our God.' If we can prove that this is a prophecy of John's preparing the way of our Saviour, it will appear that our Saviour, in this scripture, is called Jehovah. Now that it is a prediction of John's being Christ's forerunner, appointed to prepare the Jews for his reception, and to give them an intimation that he whom they had long looked for would suddenly appear, is plain from those scriptures in the New Testament, which expressly refer to the passage and explain it in this sense. Thus, 'This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight.'<sup>s</sup> Hence, he whose way John was to prepare, whom the prophet Isaiah calls Jehovah, is our Saviour.

Again, it is said, 'Sanctify the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.'<sup>t</sup> Here the prophet not only speaks of a person, whom he calls 'Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts,' which alone would prove him to be a divine Person; but he further considers him as the object of divine worship,—'Sanctify him, and let him be your fear and your dread.' Certainly, if we can prove this to be spoken of Christ, it will be a strong and convincing argument

<sup>n</sup> Exod. iii. 6.      <sup>o</sup> Ver. 14, 15.      <sup>p</sup> Gen. xlviii. 16.      <sup>q</sup> See Dr. Allix's Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians, Chap. xiii. to xvi.      <sup>r</sup> Rev. xxii. 8, 9.      <sup>s</sup> Matt. iii. 3, t Isa. viii. 13.

to evince his proper deity. Now that it is spoken of him, is very evident, if we compare it with what immediately follows, 'And he shall be for a sanctuary.' This I would choose to render, 'For he shall be for a sanctuary;' the Hebrew particle *Vau*, which we render 'and,' being often rendered elsewhere 'for.' The person's being a sanctuary is thus assigned as a reason why we should sanctify him; and then it follows, that because the Jews will not give that glory to him which they are under obligation to render, he will be 'to them for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence,' as he shall 'be for a sanctuary' to those that are faithful. That this is spoken of Christ, appears from the subject of which it treats; for it is only he who, properly speaking, is said to be a rock of offence, or in whom the world was offended, by reason of his appearing in it in a low condition. That it is spoken of Christ appears also by comparing it with other scriptures, and particularly with Isa. xxviii. 16, 'Behold I lay in Sion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.' Here he is styled, a foundation-stone, the rock on which his church is built; and in the passage under consideration, he is called 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.' Now both scriptures are referred to, and applied to him in 1 Pet. ii. 6, 8, 'Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them that are disobedient.' Here the apostle proves plainly, that our Saviour is the Person who is spoken of, in both these texts, by the prophet Isaiah, and consequently that he is Jehovah, whom we are to sanctify and to make our fear and our dread.

Again, the name Jehovah is applied to Christ in Numb. xxi. 5—7, 'And the people spake against God, and against Moses; and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died; therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'and against thee.' He, who is called 'God,' whom they spake against, is called 'Jehovah,' who sent fiery serpents among them, which destroyed them for their speaking against him. Now this is expressly applied to our Saviour by the apostle, 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.'<sup>u</sup>

Again, the prophet Isaiah, having had a vision of the angels adoring and ministering to that glorious Person who is represented as sitting on a throne,<sup>x</sup> reflects on what he had seen, and expresses himself in these words, 'Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'of Hosts.' Now this is expressly applied to our Saviour, in John xii. 41, 'These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.' That John refers here to this vision, is evident from the preceding verse, which contains a quotation from a part of it, in which God foretells that he would blind the eyes, and harden the hearts, of the unbelieving Jews. It follows that the Person who appeared to Isaiah, sitting on a throne, whom he calls 'Jehovah,' was our Saviour.

Again, our point may be further argued, from Isa. xlv. 21, 'There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.' This text is a glorious proof of our Saviour's deity, not only from his being called Jehovah, but from several other divine characters being ascribed to him. The Person whom the prophet speaks of, styles himself Jehovah, and adds, that there is no God besides him; and he is represented as swearing by himself, which none ought to do but a divine Person; and he encourages all the ends of the earth to look to him for salvation. If, therefore, it can be made to appear that this is spoken of our Saviour, it will be an undeniable proof of his proper deity; since nothing more than this can be said



to express the glory of the Father. Now that the words are spoken of our Saviour, must be allowed by every one who reads them impartially; for there are several things—such as that all the ends of the earth are invited to look to him for salvation—which agree with his character as Mediator. We have a parallel scripture, which is plainly applied to him, ‘And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse,’ that is, the Messiah, who should spring from the root or stock of Jesse, ‘which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it,’ or to him, ‘shall the Gentiles seek.’ This is the same thing as for the ends of the earth to look to him. Besides, the phrase, ‘looking to him,’ is a metaphor, taken from a very remarkable type of men’s looking to him as the Saviour,—namely, Israel’s looking to the brazen serpent for healing. Thus he who is here spoken of, is represented as a Saviour, and as the object of faith. Again, he is represented as swearing by himself, ‘That unto him every knee should bow, and every tongue should swear.’ This is expressly applied to our Saviour, in the New Testament, as containing a prophecy of his being the Judge of the world, ‘We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’<sup>2</sup> The same words are used, with a little variation, in Phil. ii. 10, 11, ‘That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’ Again, the person of whom the prophet speaks, is one against whom the world was incensed; which can be meant of none but Christ, as signifying the opposition that he should meet with, and the rage and fury that should be directed against him, when appearing in our nature. Again, he is said to be one in whom ‘we have righteousness,’ and in whom ‘the seed of Israel shall be justified;’ which very evidently agrees with the account we have of him in the New Testament, as a Person by whose righteousness we are justified, or whose righteousness is imputed to us for that end.

This leads us to consider another scripture, in which Christ is called Jehovah; ‘This is his name, whereby he shall be called, the Lord,’ or Jehovah, ‘our righteousness.’<sup>a</sup> His being called ‘our righteousness,’ as was before observed, implies, that the Messiah, our great Mediator, is the Person spoken of, who is called Jehovah. This is farther evinced from the context; for it is said, ‘Behold the days come,’ namely, the gospel day, ‘that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.’<sup>b</sup> This any one who judges impartially of the sense of scripture, will conclude to be spoken concerning our Saviour’s erecting the gospel-dispensation, and being the sole Lord and Governor of his church. How the exercise of his dominion over it proves his deity, will be considered under a following head. All we need to observe at present is, that this description is very agreeable to his character in scripture, as Mediator. We conclude, therefore, that, in this passage, he is called Jehovah. It is objected, however, that the words may be otherwise translated, namely, ‘This is the name, whereby the Lord our righteousness,’ that is, the Father, ‘shall call him.’ But the Father is never called in scripture, ‘our righteousness,’ as was but now observed; this being a character peculiar to the Mediator, as is fully explained in several places in the New Testament. Besides, it is well-known that the Hebrew word<sup>c</sup> signifies either actively or passively, as it is differently pointed, the letters being the same. We shall not enter into a critical disquisition concerning the origin or authenticity of the Hebrew points, in order to prove that our translation, rather than that mentioned in the objection, is just; but shall prove this from the context. It appears thence, that if the passage were translated according to the sense of the objectors, it would be little less than a tautology; for it would then read: ‘I will raise to David a righteous branch; and this is the name whereby Jehovah, our righteousness, shall call him, namely, the Branch.’ Hence, the sense of our translation of the text, seems, at least, more natural. It is also more agreeable to the grammatical construction observed in the Hebrew language; in which the words of a sentence are not trans-

y. Isa. xi. 10.

z Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

a Jer. xxiii. 6.

b Ver. 5.

c קריאר.



posed as they are in the Greek and Latin, which they are supposed to be, in the sense of the text contained in the objection. But it is farther objected, that though our translation were just, and Christ were called Jehovah, yet the passage will not prove his deity, since it is elsewhere said concerning the church, 'This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord,' or Jehovah, 'our righteousness.'<sup>d</sup> It is evident, however, from the context, that this is a parallel scripture to the one in question. The same Person, 'the Branch,' is spoken of; and the same things are predicted concerning the gospel-church, that was to be governed by him. While it is plain that our translators understood this text as spoken of the church of the Jews, or rather of the gospel-church, as many others do; yet, if we consider the sense of the Hebrew words here used,<sup>e</sup> it is very evident that they might, with equal, if not with greater propriety, have been rendered, 'shall be called by her.' The sense, therefore, is the same as that of the other passage; the Branch, namely, our Saviour, is to be called, 'the Lord our righteousness,' and adored as such by the church.

There is another scripture, in which our Saviour is called Jehovah; 'And ye shall know that I am the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'your God, and none else';<sup>f</sup> compared with the words in the context: 'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord,' or Jehovah, 'shall be delivered.'<sup>g</sup> In both these verses, it is evident that our Saviour is called 'Jehovah.' The Person who is so called in the former of them, is said to 'pour out his Spirit upon all flesh,'<sup>h</sup> &c. These words are expressly applied to Christ in Acts ii. 16, 17. The pouring out of his Spirit on all flesh, which they predict, is particularly ascribed to him:<sup>i</sup> 'Therefore being, by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' The argument, then, is this: He who was, according to this prophecy, to 'pour out his Spirit on all flesh,' is called 'Jehovah, your God'; but our Saviour is said to have poured out the Spirit,—therefore the name Jehovah is justly applied to him. As to the latter of the verses, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered,' this also is applied to Christ, by Paul in the epistle to the Romans, and explained as spoken of him.<sup>k</sup> That the apostle there speaks of calling on the name of Christ, is plain from the preceding and following context. What he terms 'calling on the name of the Lord,' he previously terms,<sup>l</sup> 'confessing the Lord Jesus'; and he there connects this with salvation. He then proceeds to consider, that, in order to our 'confessing him,' or 'calling on his name,' it is necessary that Christ should 'be preached.'<sup>m</sup> He farther adds, that though Christ was preached, and his glory proclaimed in the gospel, yet the Jews believed not in him, and consequently called not on his name. This he treats as an accomplishment of what had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah,<sup>n</sup> 'Who hath believed our report?' &c.; intimating that it was predicted, that our Saviour should be rejected, and not be believed in, by the Jews. It is hence very evident that the apostle is speaking concerning him, and applying to him what is mentioned in the passage in Joel, in which he is called Jehovah. This glorious name, therefore, belongs to him.

Several other scriptures might have been quoted, to prove that Christ is called Jehovah—scriptures which are applied to him in the New Testament, and some of which may be incidentally mentioned under some following arguments. I think, however, that what has been already said is abundantly sufficient to prove his deity, from his having this glorious name given to him. I shall proceed, therefore, to consider some other names given to him for the proof of this.

He is styled 'Lord' and 'God,' in a sense which plainly proves his proper deity. We will not, indeed, deny that the names 'Lord' and 'God' are sometimes given to creatures; yet we are not left without sufficient light, whereby we may plainly discern when they are applied to the one living and true God, and when not. To assert the contrary, would be to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God. Not only would it render those scriptures in which they occur like the trumpet that gives an uncertain sound; but we should be in the greatest danger, in a matter of the

d Jer. xxxiii. 16.  
i Verse 32.

e יְהוָה לֵה.  
k Rom. x. 13.

f Joel ii. 27.  
l Verse 9.

g Ver. 32.  
m Ver. 14, 15.

h Ver. 28  
n Isa. liii. 1

highest importance, of being led aside into a most destructive mistake, and induced to give that glory to the creature which is due to God only. We shall always find something either in the text or in the context, which evidently determines the sense of these names, when they are applied to God, and when to the creature.

Let it be observed, that whenever the word 'God' or 'Lord' is given to a creature, there is some diminutive character annexed to it, which plainly distinguishes it from the true God. Thus when it is given to idols, it is intimated, that they are called or falsely esteemed gods or lords by their deceived worshippers. Accordingly they are styled 'strange gods,'<sup>o</sup> 'molten gods,'<sup>p</sup> and 'new gods ;'<sup>q</sup> and their worshippers are reproved as 'brutish and foolish.'<sup>r</sup> Again, when the word 'God' is applied to men, there is something in the context which implies, that, whatever characters of honour are given to them, they are, notwithstanding, subject to the divine control. Thus it is said, 'God standeth in the congregation of the mighty ; he judgeth among the gods.'<sup>s</sup> They are described also as at best but mortal men : 'I have said, ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High ; but ye shall die like men.' They are depicted, it is true, as partakers of the divine image, consisting in some lesser branches of sovereignty and dominion ; but this is infinitely below the idea of sovereignty and dominion which is expressed by the word, when applied to the great God. God says to Moses, indeed, 'See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.'<sup>t</sup> But by this we are not to understand that any of the divine perfections were communicated to or predicated of him ; for God cannot give his glory to another. The sense is plainly, that he was set in God's stead. Thus he is said to be instead of God to Aaron ;<sup>u</sup> and the same expression is used by Elihu to Job,<sup>x</sup> 'I am according to thy wish in God's stead.' Hence, Moses being made a god to Pharaoh, implies, not that he should have a right to receive divine honour, but merely that he should, by being God's minister in inflicting the plagues which he designed to bring on Pharaoh and his servants, be rendered formidable to them. Again, when the word 'God' is put absolutely, without any additional character of glory or diminution annexed to it, it must always be understood of the great God ; this being that name by which he is generally known in scripture, and which is never otherwise applied, without an intimation given that he is not intended by it. Thus the Father and the Son are described in John i. 1, 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God,' and in many other places of scripture. Hence, if we can prove that our Saviour is called God in scripture, without any thing in the context tending to detract from the most known sense of the word, we shall furnish sufficient evidence of his proper deity. We shall find, however, that he is not only called God, but that there are some additional glories annexed to that name, by which his deity will more abundantly appear.

As to the word 'Lord,' though it is often applied to creatures, and is given to superiors by their subjects or servants, yet it also is sufficiently distinguished when applied to a divine person, and when applied to creatures. Now, if we can prove that our Saviour is called 'Lord' and 'God' in the supreme sense, the names will sufficiently evince his proper deity. In order to this, we shall consider several scriptures in which he is so called ; and in which also several characters of glory, and divine honours are ascribed to him, which are due to none but a divine Person, and which abundantly determine the sense of the words as applied to him.

He is called 'Lord' in Psal. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' That our Saviour, the Messiah, is the Person whom David calls his Lord, is very evident from the words being quoted and applied to him in the New Testament.<sup>y</sup> It is evident also from a passage in our Saviour's history, that, by calling him Lord, David ascribes divine honour to him. When the question was put to the Pharisees, If Christ were David's Lord, how could he be his Son ? they might easily have replied to it, had it been taken in a lower sense ; for it is not difficult to suppose that David might have a son descending from him, who might be advanced to the highest honours short of what are divine. But the Pharisees, not understanding how two

<sup>o</sup> Deut. xxxii. 16.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 17.

<sup>q</sup> Judges v. 8.

<sup>r</sup> Jer. x. 8.

<sup>s</sup> Psal. lxxxii. 1, 6.

<sup>t</sup> Exod. vii. 1.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. iv. 16.

<sup>x</sup> Job xxxiii. 6.

<sup>y</sup> Matt. xxii. 44, &c.



infinitely distant natures could be united in one person, so that he should be called David's Son, and yet his Lord, in such a sense as proves his deity, they were confounded, and put to silence. But whether they acknowledged him to be a divine Person or not, it is evident that David considers him to be such,—that he considered him to be the Person who, pursuant to God's covenant made with him, was to sit and rule upon his throne, in whom alone it could be said that it should be perpetual, so that of his kingdom there should be no end. And inasmuch as speaking of the Person whom he calls his Lord, who was to be his Son, he says, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,'<sup>z</sup> he plainly infers, that he should exert divine power, and consequently evince himself to be a divine Person.

If the word 'Lord' be applied to Christ, as denoting his sovereignty over the church, and his being the Governor of the world, it will be considered under the next head, when we speak concerning those glorious titles and attributes ascribed to him which prove his deity. We shall therefore wave it at present as applied in this sense; and shall only name two or three scriptures, in which he is called 'Lord' in a more glorious sense than when it is applied to any creature. Thus in Rev. xvii. 14, speaking of the Lamb, which is a character that can be applied to none but him as Mediator, he is called, 'Lord of lords.' In Rev. i. 5, he is called, 'the Prince of the kings of the earth;' and in 1 Cor. ii. 8, 'the Lord of glory.' These texts will be more particularly considered, when we speak concerning his glorious titles, as an argument to prove his deity. All that we shall observe at present is, that this is the same character by which God is acknowledged by anti-trinitarians to be described in Deut. x. 17, 'The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords; a great God, and terrible.' As truly, therefore, as the deity of the Father is proved from this scripture, so truly have we ground to infer the deity of Christ, when he is called Lord, with additional marks of glory.

Christ is often in scripture called 'God,' in a sense in which the name is never applied to a creature. In Psal. xlv. 6. it is said, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' Many glorious things are spoken of him in that psalm, which farther prove that he whom it calls 'God' is a divine Person, in the same sense as God the Father is. He is said, in particular, to be 'fairer than the children of men,'<sup>a</sup> that is, infinitely above them. Addressing the church it is also said, 'He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.'<sup>b</sup> The psalm likewise describes the church's complete blessedness as consisting in her being brought into his palace who is the King of it; and so it denotes him to be the spring and fountain of complete blessedness. It adds that 'his name,' or glory, 'is to be remembered in all generations, and that the people shall praise him for ever and ever.' This glory is ascribed to him who is called 'God;' and many other things are said concerning him, relating to his works, his victories, his triumphs, which are very agreeable to the divine character. It hence evidently appears that the Person spoken of in this psalm, is truly and properly God. The anti-trinitarians, I am aware, will object, that several things are said concerning him in this psalm, which argue his inferiority to the Father. These only prove, however, that the Person spoken of is considered as God-man, Mediator; in which respect he is, in one nature, equal, and, in the other, inferior to him. Were the psalm understood otherwise, one set of expressions contained in it would be inconsistent with and contradictory to another. We shall only add, as an undeniable proof that it is Christ who is here spoken of, and that he is considered as Mediator, that the apostle, speaking of him as Mediator, and describing his divine glory as such, quotes these words of the psalm, 'Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.'<sup>c</sup>

Another instance of the name 'God' being applied to our Saviour in the sense of deity, occurs in Matt. i. 23, 'Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.' His incarnation, as is plain from the words, is what gives occasion to his being described by the name or character, 'God with us.' This title imports the same thing as the phrase which occurs in John i. 14, 'The Word was made flesh,

z Psal. cx. 3.

a Ver. 2.

b Ver. 11.

c Heb. i. 8.



and dwelt among us.' This cannot be applied to any but Christ. To say that the Father is called Emmanuel, is such a strain upon the sense of the text as no impartial reader will allow of. It is obviously a name given to the Son upon the great occasion of his incarnation; and it intimates as glorious a display of his deity, as the text in Exodus does of the deity of the Father, if we suppose it to apply to him, 'I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.'<sup>d</sup>

Again, Christ's deity is proved from his being styled 'God, manifest in the flesh.'<sup>e</sup> These words imply that the second Person in the Godhead was united to our nature; for neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost were ever said to be manifested in the flesh. Besides, he is, in the context, distinguished from the Spirit, as justified by him. Nor is he called 'God,' on account of his incarnation, as some Socinian writers suppose; for to become incarnate supposes the pre-existence of that nature to which the human nature was united. Accordingly, the incarnation is elsewhere called assuming, or taking flesh; as it is here called, being manifested in it. Christ, therefore, was God before the act of incarnation. And there is certainly nothing in the text which determines the word 'God' to be taken in a less proper sense, than when it is applied to the Father. It is objected, however, that the word 'God' is not found in all the manuscripts of the Greek text, nor in some translations, particularly the Syriac, Arabic, and vulgar Latin, which render the passage, 'the mystery which was manifest in the flesh,' &c. But it is not pretended that the word is left out in more than two Greek copies; and it is very unreasonable to oppose these to all the rest. As to the Syriac and Arabic translations, some suppose that it is not true in fact that the word 'God' is left out in the Arabic; and though the Syriac leaves it out, it retains it in the sense, which is, 'great is the mystery of godliness that he was manifested in the flesh.' As to the vulgar Latin version, it has not credit enough, especially among protestants, to stand in competition with so many copies of scripture in which the word is found. We can by no means, therefore, give up the argument which is taken from this text to prove our Saviour's deity. Besides, we might appeal to the very words of the text itself, from which it plainly appears, that if the word 'God' be left out, the following part of the verse will not be so consistent with 'a mystery' as it is with 'our Saviour.' It is a very great impropriety of expression to say that 'a mystery,' or as some Socinian writers explain it, 'the will of God,'<sup>f</sup> was manifest in the flesh, and received in a glorious manner. Such an idea is not agreeable to the sense of the Greek words; for it is plain that the phrase *ἐν σαρκὶ φανερωθῆναι*, which we justly render 'was manifest in the flesh,' is never used in scripture to signify, as the Socinians understand it, the preaching of the gospel by weak mortal men. On the other hand, it is often used to denote the manifestation of our Saviour in his incarnation; and it is explained in John i. 14, where it is said that he was 'made flesh, and we beheld his glory.'<sup>g</sup> As for the gospel, though it met with reception when preached to the Gentiles, and there were many circumstances of glory which attended the dispensation of it, yet it could not be said for that reason to be received up into glory. Now, since what is said in this verse agrees to our Saviour, and not to the mystery of godliness, we are bound to conclude that he is God manifest in the flesh, and that the objection of the Anti-trinitarians is of no force.

The next scripture which we shall consider is Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.' He who is here spoken of is said to have an ownership in the church. This no mere creature can be said to have. Our Saviour is not only here but elsewhere described as having it. Thus it is said, 'He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house; and he that built all

<sup>d</sup> Exod. xxix. 45.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>f</sup> Vid. Catech. Racov. ad Quæst. LIX.

<sup>g</sup> It is elsewhere said concerning him, 1 John iii. 5, that he was manifested, &c., *φανερωθῆναι*, as also in ver. 8. As for what is said in the last clause of the verse, that 'he was received up into glory,' it is a very great strain on the sense of those words to apply it to a mystery, or to the gospel, since the words, *ἀνελθῆναι ἐν δόξῃ*, plainly intimate a person's meeting with a glorious reception when ascending into heaven. *ἀναλαμβάνομαι* signifies *sursum recipere*, therefore we render it, received up. So it is often applied to our Saviour, Acts i. 2, 11, 22; and his ascension is called, Luke ix. 51, *ἡμερα της αναλήψεως*, the time in which he should be received up.

things is God.<sup>h</sup> This is as though the apostle had said, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ hath built not only his church but all things, and therefore must be God.' Again, he is called 'a Son over his own house ;'<sup>i</sup> so that he is the purchaser, the builder, and the proprietor of his church, and therefore must be a divine person. Then, in the passage under consideration, it is observed, that he who hath purchased this church is God, and that God hath done this with his own blood. Now this cannot be applied to any but the Mediator, the Son of God, whose deity it plainly proves.—Some object against this sense of the text, that the word 'God' is here referred to the Father; and so the sense is, 'Feed the church of God,' that is, of the Father, 'which He,' that is, Christ, 'hath purchased with his own blood.' This seems, however, a very great strain and force upon the grammatical sense of the words; for certainly 'He' must refer to the immediate antecedent, and that is 'God,' to wit, the Son. If such a method of expounding scripture were to be allowed, it would be an easy matter to make the word of God speak anything we please. We must therefore take the passage in the most plain and obvious sense; and then it appears that God the Son has purchased the church with his own blood, and that he has a right to the church.—But it is objected, again, that God the Father is said to have purchased the church by the blood of Christ; which is called his blood, as he is the Proprietor of all things. But though God is the Proprietor of all things, no one who does not labour very hard to maintain the cause he is defending, would understand 'his blood' in this sense. According to this method of speaking, God the Father might be said to have done every thing that the Mediator did, and so to have shed his blood upon the cross, as well as to have purchased the church by it.

The next scripture we shall notice as proving our Saviour's deity by applying to him the name 'God,' is Rom. ix. 5, 'Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.' Here he is not only called 'God,' but 'God blessed for ever.' This is a character too high for any creature; and is the very same that elsewhere is given to the Father, who is styled, 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore,'<sup>k</sup> that is, not only the object of worship, but the fountain of blessedness. Now, if Christ be so called, as it seems evident that he is, then the word 'God' is, in this text, applied to him in the highest sense, so as to argue him a divine Person. That the text does apply it to our Saviour, is plain; because he is the subject of the proposition which it contains, and is considered as being 'of the fathers concerning the flesh,' that is, with respect to his human nature. It is objected, however, that the words may be rendered thus: 'Let God,' namely, the Father, 'who is over all, be blessed for ever,' that is, for the great privilege that Christ should come in the flesh. In defence of our translation, it may be remarked, that it is very agreeable to the grammatical construction of the words. Erasmus, it is true, defends the other sense of the text, and so gives countenance to many after him, to make use of it against our argument; and that sense, he says, may be plainly proved from many other scriptures. It is very strange that, with one hand, he should build up, and with the other, overthrow Christ's proper deity. Shall we attribute this to that affectation which he had to appear singular, and, in many things, to run counter to the common sense of mankind; or to the favourable thoughts which he appears to have had, in some instances, of the Arian scheme? Most of the ancient versions render this text in the sense of our translation. Most of the ancient Fathers also do so, as a late writer observes,<sup>l</sup> in their defence of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is certain, too, that the sense given by the Anti-trinitarians, is so apparently forced and strained, that some of the Socinians themselves, whose interest it was to have adopted it, have not thought fit to insist on it. A learned writer,<sup>m</sup> who has appeared in the Anti-trinitarian cause, and who certainly would have defended his sense of the text better than he does had it been defensible, seems to argue below himself, when he attempts to give a turn to it agreeable to his own scheme: "It is uncertain," he alleges, "whether the word 'God' was originally in the text; and if it

<sup>h</sup> Hebrews iii. 3, 4.<sup>i</sup> Ver. 6.<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 31.<sup>l</sup> See Whitby in loc.<sup>m</sup> See Dr. Clark's Reply to Nelson, page 96.



was, whether it be not spoken of the Father.” To say no more than this, is not to defend the Anti-trinitarian sense of the text; for if there were any doubt whether the word ‘God’ was left out of any ancient manuscripts, he would have obliged the world had he referred to them. This neither he, nor, I think, any one else has done. As to his supposing it uncertain whether the name be not there applied to the Father, he ought to have proved and not suggested this. We might observe, in defence of our translation, that whenever the words are so used in the New Testament that they may be translated, ‘Blessed be God,’<sup>n</sup> they are disposed in a different form, or order, from that in which they occur here. But though this is a probable argument, we shall not insist on it, but shall rather prove our translation to be just, from the connection of the words with what goes immediately before. There the apostle had been speaking of our Saviour, as descending from the fathers, according to the flesh; or he had been considering him as to his human nature. It is hence very reasonable to suppose that he would speak of him as to his divine nature. Both natures are spoken of together, in John i. 14. and elsewhere; and why they should not be so spoken of here, cannot well be accounted for. [See Note 2 Q, page 251.] Hence if our translation be only supposed to be equally just with that of the Anti-trinitarians—and I think none pretend to deny that it is—the connection of the parts of the proposition laid down in the passage determines the sense in our favour.

Here I cannot pass over that proof which we have of our Saviour’s divinity, in 1 John v. 20, ‘This is the true God, and eternal life.’ In this passage ‘the true God’ is opposed to those idols which, in the following verse, the apostle advises believers to ‘keep themselves from.’ In this sense the Anti-trinitarians themselves sometimes call Christ the true God; that is to say, he is not an idol. On this account, a learned writer<sup>o</sup> observes, that they deal with him as Judas did, when he cried, ‘Hail Master,’ and then betrayed him. They would be thought to ascribe every thing to him but proper deity. That this belongs to him, however, will evidently appear, if we can prove that these words are spoken of him. The learned author of the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity,<sup>p</sup> indeed, takes a great deal of pains to prove that it is the Father who is here spoken of; and his exposition of the former part of the text, which does not immediately support his cause, seems very just: ‘The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true,’ namely, the Father, ‘and we are in him that is true,’ speaking still of the Father, ‘by or through his Son Jesus Christ.’ But, I humbly conceive, he does not acquit himself so well in the sense he gives of the following words, on which the whole stress of the argument depends. He takes for granted, that the word *οὗτος*, ‘this,’ refers back, not, as is most natural and usual, to the last word in order, but to the last and principal in sense, namely, ‘the Father.’ This is, at least, doubtful. Any unprejudiced reader, who hath not a cause to maintain which obliges him to understand it so, would refer it to the immediate antecedent, namely, ‘the Son,’ by whom we have an interest in the Father. When the apostle had been speaking of him as Mediator, and, as such, as the Author of the great privilege of our knowing the Father and being in him, it seems very agreeable to describe him as a Person every way qualified for this work, and consequently as being the true God. Besides, the apostle had, in the beginning of the verse, spoken of the Father as ‘him that is true,’ or, as some manuscripts have it, ‘him that is the true God,’ as the same author observes. What reason, then, can we assign why this should be repeated,—why the apostle should be supposed to say, ‘We knew the Father, who is the true God, and he is the true God?’ This certainly, to say the best of it, does not run so smooth as when we apply the latter clause to our Saviour. The author referred to attempts, indeed, to remove the impropriety of the expression, by giving an uncommon sense of the words, namely, ‘This knowledge of God is the true religion, and the way to eternal life;’ or, ‘This is the true worship of God by his Son unto eternal life.’ But though this is a truth,

<sup>n</sup> Thus they are four times, Luke i. 68. 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3, and 1 Pet. i. 3. wherein *εὐλογητός* is put before *Θεός*.  
<sup>o</sup> Dr. Owen against Biddle, page 256.  
<sup>p</sup> See Dr. Clark’s Reply to Nelson, page 97.



it can hardly be supposed to comport with the grammatical sense of the words. Why should 'the true God' be taken in a proper sense in one part of the verse, and a figurative sense in the other? If, too, we take such liberty of supposing ellipses in texts, and supplying them with words which make to our own purpose, it would be no difficult matter to prove almost any doctrine from scripture. The plain sense of the text is, that the words designate our Saviour as the true God; and it is as evident a proof of his deity, as when the Father is called, 'the true God,' or 'the only true God.' The Father is called so in John xvii. 3; yet he is not, as so designated, to be considered as the only Person who is God in the most proper sense, but as having the one divine nature. In this sense the word 'God' is always taken, when God is said to be one. Moreover, let it be observed, that he who, in the passage under consideration, is called the true God, is styled, 'life eternal.' This, I humbly conceive, the Father never is called; though, in one of the foregoing verses, he is said to 'give us eternal life.' On the other hand, not only is it said concerning our Saviour, that 'in him was life,'<sup>q</sup> but he says, 'I am the life,'<sup>r</sup> and it is said, 'The life was manifested, and we have seen it,'<sup>s</sup> or him, 'and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father,' *προς τον πατερα*. This is an explanation of his own words, *προς τον Θεον*, 'with God:' it is also an explanation of what the apostle had said elsewhere, The word of Life, or the Person who calls himself the life, 'was manifested unto us.'<sup>t</sup> This seems to be a peculiar phrase, used by this apostle, whereby he sets forth our Saviour's glory under this character. He calls him 'Life,' or 'Eternal life;' and he that is so, is the same Person who is called 'the true God.' The character of being 'true,' is often applied to Christ, by the same inspired writer; it is applied by him more than by any other, as appears from several scriptures.<sup>x</sup> And though, indeed, it refers to him, as Mediator, as does also the name, 'Eternal life,' it agrees very well with his proper deity. We cannot but think, therefore, that our Lord's true deity is plainly evinced by this text.

There is another scripture which speaks of Christ, not only as God, but with some other divine characters of glory added to this name, which prove his proper deity. In Isa. ix. 6, he is styled, 'the mighty God;' and several other glorious titles are given to him, as 'the Wonderful, Counsellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.' These are all applied to him, as one whose incarnation was foretold, 'To us a child is born,' &c. He is farther described as a person who was to be the Governor of his church; for it is said, 'the government shall be upon his shoulder.' All these expressions so exactly agree with his character as God-man, Mediator, that they contain an evident proof of his proper deity. They, however, who deny our Saviour's deity, object, that the words ought to be otherwise translated, 'the wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, shall call him, the Prince of peace.' We have before observed, in defence of our translation of another text,<sup>y</sup> that the Hebrew word which we translate, 'he shall be called,' which is the same with that used in this text, does not fully appear to have an active signification, and that such transpositions as are, both there and here, made use of by the Anti-trinitarians, are not agreeable to that language. Our sense of the text is so plain and natural, that any one who reads it impartially, without forcing it to speak what they would have it, would understand it in the sense in which we translate it; and it then contains a very evident, proof of our Saviour's divinity.

There is another scripture which speaks of Christ, not only as God, but as 'the great God:' 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.'<sup>z</sup> None ever denied that he, who is said 'to appear,' is true and proper God; and the principal thing we have to prove is, that the text refers only to our Saviour, or that the apostle does not speak of two persons, the Father and the Son, but only of the Son. Though we often take occasion to vindicate our translation, we cannot but think that here it ought to be

q John i. 4.

u 1 John i. 2.

z Tit. ii. 13.

r John xiv. 6.

x Rev. iii. 7, 14; xix. 11.

s 1 John i. 2.

t John i. 1.

y See page 176.

corrected. The word 'and,' should be rendered 'even.'<sup>a</sup> But as I would not lay too great stress on a grammatical criticism, how probable soever it may be, we may consider some other things in the text, such as are agreeable to his character as Mediator, by which it appears that our Saviour is the only person spoken of in it, from what is said of him. The apostle speaks of his 'appearing.' Elsewhere, he speaks of the same thing, 'He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.'<sup>b</sup> The apostle John also says, 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him,'<sup>c</sup> &c. Then he who is said to appear, is called 'the blessed hope,' that is, the object of his people's expectation,—who shall be blessed by him when he appears. In the same way, he is elsewhere called 'our hope,'<sup>d</sup> and 'the hope of glory.'<sup>e</sup> Now, we do not find that the Father is described in scripture as appearing, or as the hope of his people. A late writer,<sup>f</sup> it is true, gives that turn to the text: he supposes that, as the Father is said to judge the world by Jesus Christ, and as when the Son shall come at last, it will be in the glory of his Father; so the Father may be said to appear by him, as the brightness of his glory shines forth in his appearance. But such a mode of interpretation is not used with other scriptures of a similar character, which speak of every eye seeing him in his human nature, and which plainly refer to some glories that shall be put upon that nature as the object of sense. Why, then, should we say that the text imports only that the Father shall appear in his appearing? This is such a strain upon the sense of the words, as they who make use of it would not allow of in other cases. I might have added, as a farther confirmation of the sense we have given of this text, that it agrees with what the apostle says in his epistle to Titus. There he calls the gospel, 'The doctrine of God our Saviour,'<sup>g</sup> and, having described him as our Saviour, he proceeds to show wherein he was so,—namely, 'by giving himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.'<sup>h</sup> Christ is also called 'God our Saviour,' in 2 Pet. i. 1, where the church is said 'to have obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;' or, as the marginal reading has it, 'of our God and Saviour.' This seems to be so just a reading of the text we are considering, that some, on the other side of the question, allow that the words will very well bear it. They think, however, as the author but now mentioned says, that their view of it agrees with the whole tenor of scripture. This is little other than a boast, as though the scripture favoured their scheme of doctrine; but whether it does or not, they who consider the arguments on both sides may judge. We think we have as much reason to conclude that our sense of the words, which establishes the doctrine of our Saviour's being the great God, is agreeable to the whole tenor of scripture. We proceed, however, to another argument.

There is one scripture in which our Saviour is called both 'Lord' and 'God': 'And Thomas answered and said unto him, 'My Lord and my God.'<sup>i</sup> The manner of address to our Saviour, in these words, implies an act of adoration, given to him by this disciple, upon his having received a conviction of his resurrection from the dead. There is nothing in the text but what imports his right to the same glory

a It is certain, that *και* is often exegetical, as well as copulative; and it appears to be so, by a great many instances in the New Testament, when it is put between two nouns, the first of which has an article, and the other none. Thus it will be acknowledged by all, that it is taken, in 2 Cor. i. 3, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' *ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ*. So in Eph. i. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 3; Rom. xv. 6; Phil. iv. 20; 2 Cor. xi. 31; and in Coloss. ii. 2. In these scriptures, and others of a similar nature, the Arians themselves allow that this rule holds good; though they will not allow it when it proves our Saviour's deity, because it militates against their own scheme. In Eph. v. 5, the apostle speaks of 'the kingdom of Christ, and of God,' as we render it; but I think it ought to be rendered, 'even of God; for it is, *τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ*. So in 2 Thess. i. 12, 'The grace of our God, and,' or even, 'of the Lord Jesus Christ;' the words are, *τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. See among many other scriptures to the like purpose, 1 Tim. v. 21, and chap. vi. 13; 2 Pet. i. 2. It is true, there are several exceptions to this rule, though they are generally in instances in which it is impossible for the latter word to contain an explanation of the former. In other instances it, for the most part, holds good; and therefore it will at least amount to a probable argument, that the words in this text, *τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, ought to be rendered, 'of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.' [See Note 2 R, page 252.]

b Heb. ix. 28.

c 1 John iii. 2.

d 1 Tim. i. 1.

e Coloss. i. 27.

f See Dr. Clark's Reply to Nelson, p. 85.

g Tit. ii. 10.

h Verse 14.

i John xx. 28.



which belongs to the Father, when he is called his people's God. Herein they lay claim to him as their covenant God, their chief good and happiness. Thus David says, 'I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God;'<sup>k</sup> and God promises that 'he would say to them which were not his people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God;'<sup>l</sup> 'Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee;'<sup>m</sup> and the apostle Paul, speaking of the Father, says, 'My God shall supply all your need,'<sup>n</sup> &c.; that is, the God from whom I have all supplies of grace, the God whom I worship, to whom I owe all I have or hope for, who is the Fountain of blessedness. Now, if there be nothing in the text we are considering which determines the words to be taken in a lower sense, as there does not appear to be, we are bound to conclude, that Christ's deity is fully proved from it. But some of the Socinians suppose that the words, 'My Lord, and my God,' are a form of exclamation, or admiration,—that Thomas was surprised when he became convinced that our Saviour was risen from the dead, and so cried out, as one in a rapture, 'O my Lord! O my God!' intending hereby the Father, to whose power alone this event was owing. But such exclamations, though often used in common conversation, and sometimes without that due regard to the divine Majesty which ought to attend them, are not agreeable to the scripture way of speaking. Even, however, if any scriptures could be produced to justify it, it is sufficiently evident that no such exclamation is contained in these words. Not only will the grammatical construction not admit of it,<sup>o</sup> but the words are brought in as a reply to what Christ had spoken: 'Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord,' &c. Now, it is very absurd to suppose that an exclamation contains the form of a reply. The words must therefore be understood as an explicit acknowledgment of Christ as his Lord and his God. The objection represents the words so contrary to the known acceptation of them, that many of the Socinians themselves, and other late writers who oppose our Saviour's proper deity, do not think fit to insist on it, but have recourse to some other methods to account for those difficulties which lie in their way in this and other texts where Christ is plainly called God, as in John i. 1, and many other places in the New Testament.

Here we may take occasion to consider the method which the Anti-trinitarians use to interpret those scriptures in which Christ is called God. Some have recourse to a critical remark on the word *Θεός*, 'God,'—namely, that when it has the article *ὁ* before it, this adds an emphasis to the sense, and determines it to be applied to the Father. And as the word is sometimes applied to him, when there is no article—a fact which, to some, would appear an objection sufficient to invalidate this remark—they add, that it is always to be applied to him, if there be nothing in the text which determines it otherwise. This remark, as Dr. Clark observes,<sup>p</sup> was first made by Origen, and afterwards largely insisted on by Eusebius. Dr. Clark so far agrees with it that, in his opinion, the word *Θεός*, when put absolutely in scripture, is never applied to any other Person. Let us inquire into the justice of the remark. By the word 'God' being absolutely taken, whether *ὁ* has an article before it or not, we understand simply being used without any thing to determine its application, either to the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost. On the other hand, when it is not absolutely used, there are several things, by which we may certainly know to which of the divine Persons it belongs. Thus it is particularly applied to the Father, when there is something in the text that distinguishes him from the Son or Spirit. So, 'Ye believe in God,' namely, the Father, 'believe also in me.'<sup>q</sup> In all those scriptures in which Christ is called the Son of God, the word 'God' is determined to be applied to the Father. It is so determined also, when God is said to act in relation to Christ as Mediator; as in Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' And the word 'God' is determined to be applied to the Son, when he is particularly mentioned, or called 'the Son,' or described by any of his mediatorial works or characters, as the phrases, 'God,' that is, the Son, 'with us,'<sup>r</sup> and 'God manifest in the flesh';<sup>s</sup> or

k Psal. xxxi. 14.

l Hos. ii. 23.

m Chap. viii. 2.

n Phil. iv. 19.

o The words, *ὁ Θεός* and *ὁ Θεός*, are in the nominative case, which denotes that they are not spoken in a way of exclamation.

p See Reply to Nelson, p. 67.

q John xiv. 1.

Matt. i. 23.

s 1 Tim. iii. 16.



when there is any thing in the context which discovers that the word 'God' is to be applied to him. With respect to the Holy Ghost, when any of his personal works or characters are mentioned in connection with the word 'God,' these determine the name to belong to him. Thus, speaking concerning lying to the Holy Ghost, it is said, 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.'<sup>t</sup> Again, it is said, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?'<sup>u</sup> We shall say more of this, however, when we speak of the deity of the Holy Ghost. Now in these and similar cases, the word 'God' is not put absolutely. On the other hand, it is put absolutely when there is nothing of the nature which we have specified to determine its application. It is thus put, for example, in those scriptures which speak of the divine Unity, as, 'There is none good but one, that is God';<sup>x</sup> 'There is none other God but one';<sup>y</sup> 'Thou believest that there is one God,'<sup>z</sup> &c.; and 'Thou, being a man, makest thyself God';<sup>a</sup> and in many places in which there is an idea expressed of the divine perfections, without intimation as to which of the Persons in the Godhead is intended. This is what we are to understand by the word *θεος*, 'God,' being put absolutely, without any regard to its having an article before it or not. It hence appears that nothing certain can be determined concerning the particular application of the word from its having the article. Many scriptures might easily be referred to, in which it is used without an article, though applied to the Father. On the other hand, it has very often an article when applied to the Son, and sometimes when applied to idols, or false gods.<sup>b</sup> The devil also is called, *ὁ θεὸς τούτου κόσμου*, 'the god of this world.' And it may be observed, that in two evangelists,<sup>c</sup> referring to the same thing, and using the same words, one has the word with an article, and the other without.

Setting aside, then, this critical remark about the application of the word 'God,' when there is an article before *θεος*, the main thing in controversy is, how we are to apply it, when neither the context, nor any of the rules above-mentioned, give us any direction whether it is to be understood of the Father, or indifferently of any of the Persons in the Godhead. The author above-mentioned, in his Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, always applies it to the Father; and it may easily be perceived, that he has no other reason than its being used absolutely to apply many scriptures to the Father, which others, who have defended the doctrine of the Trinity in another way, for reasons contained in the context, applied to the Son.<sup>d</sup>

This is, indeed, the method used by all the Anti-trinitarians, in applying the word 'God.' That which principally actuates them is their taking it for granted, that as there is but one divine Being, so there is but one Person, the Father, who is truly and properly divine.<sup>e</sup> They hence assume that the word 'God' is to be applied to him, when not determined in scripture to signify any finite being, as the Son, or any creature below him. But this supposition, that the one divine Being is a Person, that this is only the Father, and that he is supreme or most high God, as compared with the Son and Spirit, as well as with all creatures, is not sufficiently proved. We cannot allow of it, and therefore cannot see sufficient reason to conclude that the word 'God,' when put absolutely, is to be applied to no other than the Father. That which I would humbly offer regarding this word when thus found in scripture, is, that when the Holy Ghost has left it undetermined, our safest way is to consider it as such, and to apply it indifferently to the Father, Son, or Spirit, and not to one Person, exclusive of the others. Thus, when it is said, 'The Lord our God is one Lord';<sup>f</sup> and 'there is one God, and there is none other but he,'<sup>g</sup> the meaning is, that there is but one divine Being, who is called God as opposed to the creature, or to all who are not God by nature. Hence, when in the first of these texts,<sup>g</sup> the unity of the Godhead is asserted, and Israel are exhorted to 'serve him,' they are,

<sup>t</sup> Acts v. 3, 4.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 16.

<sup>x</sup> Matt. xix. 17.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 4.

<sup>z</sup> James ii. 19.

<sup>a</sup> John x. 33.

<sup>b</sup> Acts vii. 43; xiv. 11.

<sup>c</sup> See Matt. xix. 26, compared with Mark x. 27.

<sup>d</sup> As in Rev. xix. 4—6, 17. See Scripture-doctrine, &c., pp. 67, 68, and in many other places.

<sup>e</sup> This is the sense of Dr. Clark's first Section in Part II., on which his whole scheme seems to be founded; and he speaks to the same purpose in several other places; and, in particular, in his Reply to Nelson, pp. 67, 68, he concludes the word *θεος*, God, absolutely taken, to import the same, *ὡς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός*, by which he always intends the Father.

<sup>f</sup> Mark xii. 29, 32.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. vi. 4.

at the same time, forbidden to 'go after other gods.'<sup>h</sup> And when it is said, that 'to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, is more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices,'<sup>i</sup> the words imply that religious worship was performed to God. But it is certain that this was performed to all the Persons in the Godhead; and hence none of them are excluded, in the assertion which follows, 'There is one God, and there is none other but he.' Though Dr. Clark concludes Athanasius, from his unguarded way of speaking, in some other instances, to be of his side; yet, in the very place which he refers to,<sup>k</sup> Athanasius expressly says, that when the scripture saith the Father is the only God, and 'there is one God,' and 'I am the First and the Last,' this does not destroy the divinity of the Son, for he is that one God, and first and only God, &c., and so is the Holy Ghost. Again, when it is said, 'There is none good but one, that is God,'<sup>l</sup> the words imply that the divine nature, which is predicated of all the persons in the Godhead, hath those perfections that are essential to it, and particularly that goodness by which God is denominated all-sufficient. So when it is said, 'Known unto God are all his works,'<sup>m</sup> where the word 'God' is absolute, and not, in a determinate sense, applied to either Father, Son, or Spirit, the meaning is, that, as is expressly declared also in other scriptures, all the Persons in the Godhead created all things, and that, as the consequence of this, they have a right to all things, which are known unto them.

It will probably be objected, that we appear to speak of four divine Persons,—that, in addition to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we speak of the Godhead, which is common to them all, and which we call 'God,' a word which, in other instances, denotes a personal character; and, if so, it will follow, that we are chargeable with a contradiction in terms, when we say that there are three Persons in the Godhead, namely in one Person. To this it may be replied, that though the divine nature, which is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is, when called 'God,' represented in scripture, as though it were a Person; yet it is then, in the sense of a person, to be understood only metaphorically. The Father, Son, and Spirit, on the other hand, as has been before considered, are called divine persons properly, or without a metaphor.<sup>n</sup> Moreover, the divine nature, though it is called God, is never considered as co-ordinate with, or as distinguished from, the divine persons; as though it were a person in the same sense as they are. Whenever, therefore, it is so called, it must be considered as opposed to the creature; just as 'the one God' is opposed to those who are not God by nature. It may also be remarked, that those divine perfections which are implied in the word 'God,' understood in this sense, are known by the light of nature; while the divine personality, as regards either the Father, Son, or Spirit, is a matter of pure revelation. Hence, all the force of the objection has reference to the sense of a word; and the principal thing in debate is, whether the word 'God,' absolutely and indeterminately considered, is a proper mode of speaking to set forth the divine nature? Now, if the scripture so uses the word, it is not for us to inquire about its propriety or impropriety. We must take heed, however, that we do not pervert or misunderstand the sense of it as they, on the one hand, do, who speak of the Godhead, when called 'God,' as though it were distinct from the Father, Son, and Spirit, and they, on the other, who understand it only of the Father, as opposed to the Son and Spirit. The Anti-trinitarians thus pervert the word, when they so explain the divine unity, and set aside the true deity of the Son and Spirit, as in effect, to maintain that there is but one Person in the Godhead.

Having thus considered the sense in which the Anti-trinitarians understand the word 'God,' when it is taken absolutely in scripture, we proceed to consider in what manner they understand that word when applied to Christ. They suppose that our Saviour is called God, in the New Testament, by a divine warrant, as a peculiar honour put upon him. Here, they think it not difficult to prove, that a creature may have a right conferred on him to receive divine honour. This, if they were able to prove it, would tend more to weaken our cause, and establish their own, than

<sup>h</sup> Verses 13, 14.  
<sup>l</sup> Matt. xix. 17.

<sup>i</sup> Mark xii. 33.  
<sup>m</sup> Acts xv. 18.

<sup>k</sup> See Scripture-doctrine, p. 3.  
<sup>n</sup> See Page 155.



any thing they have hitherto advanced. We shall have occasion to expose it when we come to prove the deity of the Son, from his having a right to divine worship. We shall therefore pass it over at present ; and consider them as intending by the word ‘ God,’ when applied to our Saviour, nothing more than what imports an honour infinitely below that which belongs to the Father. This they suppose to have been conferred upon him, on some occasions, relating to the work for which he came into the world. The Socinians, in particular, speak of his being called God, or the Son of God, on account of his having been ‘ sanctified,’ and ‘ sent into the world,’<sup>o</sup> that is, to redeem it, in that peculiar and low sense in which they understand the word ‘ redemption.’ Of this we shall say more hereafter. They also speak of his being called God, or the Son of God, on account of his extraordinary conception and birth, by the power of the Holy Ghost ; and they appeal, for this view of the matter, to the words : ‘ The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.’<sup>p</sup> Another reason of his having this honour conferred upon him, they take from his resurrection ; they found this on the saying, that he was ‘ declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.’<sup>q</sup> Another reason they take from his ascension into heaven, or being glorified ; at which time they suppose that he was made an high-priest, and had, in an eminent degree, the name and character of God conferred upon him. For this they refer to the words : ‘ Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest ; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.’<sup>r</sup> Now they obviously pervert the sense of these texts to which they appeal. They suppose that Christ’s mission, incarnation, resurrection, and ascension, are the principal reasons of his being called God,—that his deity is founded, not in the excellency of his nature, but in these relative circumstances,—and that it was an honour which was conferred upon him, by an act of grace, and which God, had he pleased, might have conferred on any other creature, capable of yielding obedience to him, or receiving a similar commission. In reality, however, these scriptures refer to that glory which he had as Mediator, and which are a demonstration of his deity ; and the honours they ascribe to him were agreeable to his character as a divine Person, but did not, as they suppose, constitute him God. These things, however, are not so particularly insisted on by some late Anti-trinitarians. They all, indeed, agree in this, that his right to divine honour is the result of that authority which he has received from God, to perform the works ascribed to him relating to the good of mankind. Yet we cannot but conclude, from the scriptures formerly brought to prove his proper deity, in which he is called ‘ Lord’ and ‘ God,’ in as strong a sense as when those words are applied to the Father, that he is God equal with the Father.

Having thus considered our Saviour’s proper deity, as evinced from his being called ‘ Lord’ and ‘ God,’ and also, that these names are given to him in a sense which denotes Godhead, as much as when they are applied to the Father ; we shall close this head, by considering two scriptures in which the divine nature is ascribed to him. The first of these is Coloss. ii. 9, ‘ In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.’ Here it is not said merely that God dwelleth in him. This would not so evidently have proved his deity ; because God is elsewhere said to dwell in others. Thus, it is said, ‘ God dwelleth in us.’<sup>s</sup> But here it is said, ‘ the Godhead dwelleth in him,’—language which is never applied to any creature. The expression is very emphatical, ‘ The fulness,’ yea, ‘ all the fulness of the Godhead, dwelleth in him.’ What can we understand by these words, but that all the perfections of the divine nature belong to him ? The apostle had been speaking of ‘ the mystery of Christ,’<sup>t</sup> as what the church was to know and acknowledge, as well as that of the Father. He also considers him as the Fountain of wisdom, ‘ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’<sup>u</sup> And what is here spoken concerning him, very well corresponds with these other views of his character, as being expressive of his divine glory. The fulness of the Godhead is

<sup>o</sup> John x. 36.  
<sup>t</sup> Col. ii. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Luke i. 35.  
<sup>u</sup> Ver. 3.

<sup>q</sup> Rom. i. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Heb. v. 5.

<sup>s</sup> 1 John iv. 12.



said, indeed, to 'dwell in him bodily;' by which we are to understand his human nature, as the body is, in some other scriptures, taken for the man. Thus, we are exhorted to 'present our bodies,' that is, ourselves, 'a living sacrifice to God.'<sup>x</sup> So here the divine nature, as subsisting in him, is said to dwell in his human nature, that is, to have the human nature united to it. This is meant by its 'dwelling in him bodily.' The account which some give of the sense of this text, to evade the force of the argument taken from it to prove our Saviour's deity, does little more than show how hard the Anti-trinitarians are pressed to maintain their ground. They say that the word *Θεοτης*, which we render 'Godhead,' signifies some extraordinary gifts conferred upon him,—especially such as tended to qualify him to discover the mind and will of God; or, at least, that nothing else is intended but that authority which he had from God, to do the work which he came into the world to perform. But it is certain, that this falls infinitely short of what is intended by the word 'Godhead.' That word must signify the divine nature, subsisting in him who assumed, or was made, flesh; and so dwelling in that flesh, as in a temple.

There is another scripture, which seems to attribute to him the divine nature, namely, that in which it is said, that 'he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God.'<sup>y</sup> By 'the form of God,' I humbly conceive, we are to understand the divine nature. It was, therefore, no instance of robbery in him to assert, that he was equal with God. If this sense of the text can be defended, it will evidently prove his proper deity; for it is never said, concerning any creature, that he is in the form of God, or, as the words may be rendered, that he subsisted in the form of God. It is well known, that the word which we render 'form,' is used not only by the schoolmen, but by others before their time, to signify the nature, or essential properties, of that to which it is applied. This sense of the word was well known in the apostle's days. Why then may we not suppose, that the Holy Ghost, in scripture, may once, at least, use a word which would be so understood? It will farther appear that Christ's deity is signified by it, if the following words are to be understood in the sense expressed in our translation, 'He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' The word, *ἡγήσατο*, 'he thought,' is taken in the same sense in the third verse of this chapter: 'Let every man esteem,' or think, 'others better than themselves;' and it is used about twenty times in the New Testament, five times in this epistle, besides in this text, and never understood otherwise than as signifying 'to think,' 'esteem,' or 'account.' The sense of the respective texts where it is used, would be destroyed if it were understood otherwise. This the Anti-trinitarians themselves will not deny, inasmuch as it does not affect their cause. Yet they determine that it must be otherwise translated in this text; and so they render the words, *οὐχ ἀρπαγμα τοῦ ἡγήσατο τοῦ εἶναι ἰσα Θεῷ*, 'he did not covet to be honoured,' or was not greedy, or in haste of being honoured, 'as God,'<sup>z</sup>—that is, he did not affect to appear like a divine Person, or catch at those divine honours that did not belong to him. Could this sense of the text be made out to be just, it would effectually overthrow our argument, founded on it, to prove Christ's proper deity. It is as foreign, however, from the sense of the words, as any sense that could be put upon them; and all that is pretended to justify it, is a reference which they make to a phrase, or two, used in a Greek writer, which is not at all to their purpose.<sup>a</sup> Moreover, the sense of this text, as

<sup>x</sup> Rom. xii. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Phil. ii. 6.

<sup>z</sup> See Dr. Clark's Scripture-doctrine, page 176.

<sup>a</sup> Whitby is very particular in laying down this sense of the text, and the defence of it, in his annotations on this scripture, from Heliodorus, where he finds the words, *ἀρπαγμα ποιῶν*, which he renders, 'to snatch at,' and *ἀρπαγμα ἡγεῖσθαι*, which, he supposes, signifies to pursue, or covet, a thing that is desirable. But, however, the words going before or following, in that author, may determine that to be his meaning, as the sense of particular words is oftentimes greatly varied by the context; this will not justify the rendering of them in the same sense, in other instances, of a very foreign nature, as certainly the text we are explaining must be reckoned to be. Besides, the word is not the same, for it is *ἀρπαγμα*, which properly signifies a prey, or the thing stolen; and though *ἀρπαγμα ποιῶν* *ἐπιπυλαῖν* may signify, 'to catch at an opportunity,' as a person catches at what he thinks for his advantage, yet if the word *ἀρπαγμα* had been used instead of it, it would very much have altered the sense. Though also *ἀρπαγμα ἡγεῖσθαι* signifies, 'to esteem a thing worthy to be pursued, or caught at, as a prey,' yet *ἀρπαγμα ἡγεῖσθαι*, which are the words in the text we are considering, signify no such thing, but rather 'to reckon a thing unlawful to be pursued, as what

agrecable to the words of our translation, will farther appear, if we consider that our Saviour's being 'in the form of God,' is there opposed to his having afterwards been 'in the form of a servant,' or 'in the fashion of a man.' If the latter is to be understood of his being truly and properly man, and not to be understood as merely something in him which resembled the human nature,—or if his 'taking on him the form of a servant,' imports his being in a capacity to perform that obedience which was due from him, as man to God, in a proper, and not a theatrical sense,—then it follows, that his being in the form of God, as opposed to this, must be understood to mean his being truly and properly God, or his having the divine nature. I might here consider the sense which Dr. Whitby, in his Annotations, after having given up the sense of the words, as in our translation, to the adversary, gives of our Saviour's being 'in the form of God,' as opposed to that of a servant. It is, that his being in the form of God, implies his appearing, before his incarnation, in a bright shining cloud, or light, or in a flame of fire, or with the attendance of an host of angels, as he is sometimes said to have done. This appearance the Jews call 'Shechinah,' or the divine Majesty, as being a visible emblem of his presence. This Dr. Whitby calls 'the form of God;' and he calls the absence of it in our Lord's incarnate state in this lower world, 'the form of a servant.' He adds, that when he ascended into heaven, he re-assumed the form of God; and therefore whenever he has occasionally appeared, as to the martyr Stephen at his death, or to the apostle Paul at his first conversion, it has been in that form, or with like emblems of majesty and divinity, as before his incarnation. Now what he says of Christ's appearing with emblems of majesty and glory before his incarnation, and the glory that was put upon his human nature after his ascension into heaven, is a great truth. But this is never styled, in scripture, 'the form of God;' nor is the symbol of the divine glory, however denominated by Jewish writers, ever called in scripture 'the divine majesty.' Dr. Whitby's interpretation, therefore, has no reference to the sense of this text; nor does it in the least enervate the force of the argument, taken from it, to prove our Saviour's proper deity, just as his critical remark on the words does not affect the sense of our translation. I might also observe the sense which another learned writer<sup>b</sup> gives of 'the form of God' in this text; which is the same that is given by several of the Socinians,—namely, that it has a relation to his working miracles while upon earth. This is certainly very disagreeable to the scope and design of the text; for he is said to have been 'in the form of God' before he took upon him the form of a servant, that is, before his incarnation. Besides, the working of miracles never was deemed sufficient to designate a Person to be in the form of God; for if it had, many others, both before and after him, might have been so designated. To be 'in the form of God,' however, is a glory appropriate to him who 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God.'

I would not wholly pass over that which some call a controverted text of scripture, 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one,'<sup>c</sup> lest it should be thought that I conclude the arguments brought by the Anti-trinitarians sufficiently conclusive to prove it spurious. I shall, however, say little respecting it, because it is a very hard matter to advance any thing that has not been very largely insisted on by various writers. Among these, I cannot but mention, with great esteem, one who has defended the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity with a great deal of learning and judgment, and who has given a particular account of several that have written on

he has no right to.' This is the sense of the words in our text, as if it had been said, He did not think it unlawful to pursue or lay claim to the divine honour of being equal with God, or, as we render it, 'thought it no robbery,' &c. For the justifying of this sense, every one who observes the acceptation of the Greek words, will find that ἀρπαγμος signifies the action of robbing, and ἀρπαγμα the thing stolen. This may be observed in many other words, where the former construction signifies the act,—the latter, the effect,—as in λογισμος and λογισμα, κωπασμος and κωπασμα, κολασιμος and κολασμα, δεισιμος and δεισισμα, στοχασμος and στοχασμα; and, in the New Testament, βαπτισμος signifies the action of baptizing, and βαπτισμα the ordinance in which it is performed. See Mark vii. 8. compared with Matth. iii. 7. and chap. xxi. 25. Multitudes of instances might have been given, but these are sufficient.

b Grotius in loc.

c 1 John v. 7.



either side of the question.<sup>d</sup> No one pretends to deny that this text is not to be found in a great number of manuscripts, among which some are generally allowed to be of great antiquity. It is hence the less to be wondered at, that it is left out in some ancient versions, which were taken from copies that were destitute of it; for the fact proves only that the text has been corrupted. The main question is, Which copies are to be reckoned genuine,—those which have it, or those which have it not? It must be allowed, that there is a considerable number in which the text is inserted, as Beza and others observe; and it will be a hard matter to prove that these are all spurious,—which must be done, before we shall be obliged to expunge it from scripture. If it be objected, that the manuscripts which have the text are not so ancient as those that are without it, it will be a difficult matter for the objectors to determine the antiquity of them with such exactness as, by comparing one with another, to demonstrate which has the preference, and by what a number of years. Besides, it is certain that more manuscripts of scripture by far are lost, than are now known to exist in the world; unless we suppose that religion, in ancient times, was contracted into a very narrow compass, or that very few, in the first ages of the church, had copies of scripture by them, which is not to be supposed. It will hence be hard to prove that those manuscripts which have the text, did not take it from some others which were in being before them. The genuineness or spuriousness of the text, therefore, is not to be determined only, or principally, by inspection of ancient manuscripts. Nor can I think it very material to offer conjectures concerning the manner how the text came first to be corrupted. Dr. Hammond and others suppose that, in consequence of the repetition of the words in the following verse, ‘There are three that bear record,’ some one who transcribed the epistle might have left out the text by mistake. It is, indeed, a hard thing to trace to its origin every mistake made by a transcriber. This, however, must be concluded, that it was possible for it to be left out through inadvertency; and that it could not have been put in without a notorious fraud. No one, likewise, would have attempted to do the latter, unless some end, which he thought valuable, were to be answered. As to maintaining the doctrine of the Trinity by making such an interpolation, I will not say that every one who ever defended it had honesty enough to abhor so vile an act; but this I am bound to say, that if any one made the interpolation, he was guilty, not only of fraud, but, at the same time, of folly; for the divinity of the Son and Spirit, as well as of the Father, is maintained throughout the whole scripture, and the principal thing asserted in this text concerning the Son—that he is one with the Father—is expressly laid down in his own words, ‘I and my Father are one.’<sup>e</sup> I know the Arians take occasion to censure the defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity, as if they had been guilty of this fraud; though Father Simon<sup>f</sup> is a little more sparing of his reflections on them. Even he, however, maintains, that some person or other, in the margin of a copy which he had by him, which he supposes to have been about five hundred years old, had affixed the words in question to the eighth verse as an explanation of it, intimating that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are intended by ‘the Spirit, water, and blood;’ and he hence concludes, that the next person who transcribed from this manuscript, mistook the note for a part of the text, and so inserted the seventh verse. This Le Clerc calls setting the matter in a clear light; for some persons are ready to believe that which supports their own cause, how feebly soever it may be maintained. We might easily reply, that this text was known in the world long before Father Simon’s manuscript was written, and consequently that it did not take its rise in the manner he conjectures. To produce a single instance of the nature of the one he mentions, is, I humbly conceive, nothing to the purpose.<sup>g</sup>

But, passing by what respects manuscripts, there is more stress to be laid on the

<sup>d</sup> Mr. Abraham Taylor, in his ‘True Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity,’ part I. chap. ii. in which we have his own method of reasoning in defence of the doctrine, which is, at least, sufficient to remove the boasts and insults of those who wonder that we should not give up the cause entirely to them.

<sup>e</sup> John x. 30.

<sup>f</sup> See *Histoire Crit. du Nouv. Testam.* chap. 18. p. 204.

<sup>g</sup> See this conjecture of Father Simon learnedly opposed in *Smith. Miscellan. contra Simon.*



writings of those who have referred to this text. Now it is certain, that it was often quoted in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, by ancient writers, in the fifth and following centuries ; and it must therefore have been found in the manuscripts that they used. It is not quoted indeed by the Fathers who wrote in the fourth century, namely, Athanasius, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Augustin, and some others. Nothing, however, can be inferred from this, but that it was not in the copies they made use of. Yet it does not follow that it was in no copy at the time when they wrote ; for if we look back to the third century, we find it expressly referred to by Cyprian,—a fact on which I cannot but lay a very great stress. He has it in two places :<sup>h</sup> in the former he incidentally mentions the words, ‘ These three are one ; ’ and, in the latter he expressly quotes the text, and says, ‘ It is written of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that these three are one. ’ This evidently proves, that he found it in some manuscript extant in his time ; which was before any manuscript, now in being, is pretended to have been written,—for even the Alexandrian manuscript is, I think, supposed by none to be of greater antiquity than the fourth century. The text’s having been seen by Cyprian seems to me to be of greater force than any thing that is suggested, concerning its not being found in manuscripts of later date. Cyprian too does not speak of it as a certain manuscript, which was reserved, as a treasure, in some private library,—a situation in which it might be adulterated ; nor does he pretend to prove the authority of it, or to make formal use of it, to establish the genuineness of the text ; but he quotes the text, as we do any other place of scripture, supposing it generally acknowledged to be contained in it. And Cyprian was reckoned a man of the greatest integrity, as well as piety ; and so would not refer to any text, as a part of the sacred writings, which was not so. It is objected, by the Anti-trinitarians, that he quotes, not the text in question, but the eighth verse, and that he does this, not in the words of the verse, but in a mystical sense,—interpreting ‘ the Spirit, water, and blood, agreeing in one, ’ to be the Father, Son, and Spirit, being one. They allege, also, that Facundus, an African bishop, who lived about the middle of the sixth century, quotes it in this way, and puts this sense upon it. It may be replied, however, that Facundus’ judgment is no more to be valued, who lived three hundred years after Cyprian, than if he had lived in the present age, and that he had no farther light to understand Cyprian’s meaning than we have. We know very well, too, that Cyprian was not so unreasonably fond of mystical interpretations of scripture as Origen and some others of the Fathers were. Yet even they never presumed to quote any mystical sense, which they put on scripture, as being scripture itself, or to say of it, as this Father says of his quotation, ‘ It is so written. ’ Much less are we to suppose that Cyprian did this. And whatever Facundus’ sense was of his words, another who lived in the same century with him, or a little before him, namely, Fulgentius, refers, (as the learned author above-mentioned<sup>i</sup> observes,) to this passage of Cyprian, not as a mystical explanation of the eighth verse, but as distinctly contained in the seventh verse, and, as such, makes use of it against the Arians. As for that known passage in Tertullian,<sup>k</sup> in which he says that the union, or connexion, as he calls it, of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Comforter, make three joined together, and that these three are one, that is, one divine Being, not one Person, and so refers to our Saviour’s words, ‘ I and the Father are one, ’ it is a very good explanation of the sense of this text, and discovers that, in that early age of the church, he had a right notion of the doctrine of the Trinity. But whether it be sufficiently evident, that, though defending the doctrine contained in it, he refers to the scripture under consideration, I will not determine. I shall add no more in the defence of the genuineness of this text, [See Note 2 S, page 252.] but rather refer the reader to others who have written professedly on the subject.<sup>l</sup> I shall simply notice that some Anti-trinitarians have supposed, that if this scripture were genuine, it does not prove the doctrine of the Trinity ; alleging that the words ought to be taken as implying, that the Father,

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Epist. lxxiii. ad Jubaianum. et de Unitate Eccl. § v.  
 trine, &c. page 53.      <sup>k</sup> Contra Praxeam, cap. xxv.

<sup>i</sup> See True Scripture-doctrine, &c. page 53.      <sup>l</sup> See the authors before referred to, in ‘ The True Scripture-doctrine, ’ &c. as also Tringland de tribus in cælo-testibus.

Son, and Spirit are one only in testimony. Now though it is an undoubted truth that they agree in testimony; yet this truth does not amount to the sense of the words, 'They are one.' If that had been the principal idea designed to be conveyed by them, no reason can be assigned why the phrase should be different from what it is in the following verse; and it would, doubtless, have been expressed, *as it is* *was*, 'They agree in one.'

*Proofs of Christ's Deity from his own Statements.*

We have endeavoured thus to prove our Saviour's proper deity, not only from those scriptures which speak of him as being called 'Lord' and 'God,' but from others which assert him to have the divine nature, or to be equal with God the Father. We shall now proceed to consider some scriptures in which he asserts this concerning himself; or, rather, we shall consider what proofs we have of his deity from his own words. These occur in several conferences which he held with the Jews, when he gave them reason to conclude that he was God equal with the Father,—and when they showed themselves to understand his words in this sense, by opposing him, and charging him with blasphemy. It is often replied, indeed, that nothing can be inferred to prove his deity from their misunderstanding his words and charging him, without ground, with calling himself God. But though we do not lay much stress on what they understood to be the meaning of his words; yet it plainly appears, that he intended them to understand him as they did; and if they misunderstood him, he did not undeceive them,—which certainly he ought to have done, had he not been a divine Person. If any one seems to assume to himself any branch of the glory of God which does not belong to him, though the ambiguity of words, provided they may be taken in two contrary senses, may, in some measure, excuse him from having had such a design, yet if he apprehends that they to whom he directs his discourse, are in the least inclined to misunderstand him, he is obliged, from the regard which he has to the divine glory, and the duty which he owes to those with whom he converses, as well as in defence of his own character, to undeceive them. If, therefore, our Saviour had not been equal with God, he would, doubtless, upon the least suspicion which the Jews might entertain that he asserted himself to be so, immediately have undeceived them, and would have told them that they took his words in a wrong sense, that he was far from usurping that glory which belonged to God, and that, had he intended to do so, they might justly have called him a blasphemer. This he would, doubtless, have done, had he, by his words, given them occasion to think him a divine Person if he were not so. When the people at Lystra, upon the apostles Paul and Barnabas having wrought a miracle, concluded that they were gods, with what zeal and earnestness did they undeceive them? It is said that when they perceived they were going to offer sacrifice to them, 'they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you.'<sup>m</sup> At another time, when Peter and John<sup>n</sup> had cured the lame man, and when they perceived that the people, though they did not conclude them to be divine persons, were amazed, they became jealous lest some thoughts might arise in their minds that they had a right to that glory which belongs to God alone, or that the miracle was to be ascribed to themselves; and 'when Peter saw that they marvelled, and that the people ran together, he answered, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?' and he accordingly took occasion to show that the glory of the miracle was due to none but God. But our Saviour takes no such method to exculpate himself from this charge of blasphemy. We must therefore suppose that the Jews did not mistake his words, and that he intended that they should understand him to be a divine Person.

Yea, Christ is so far from undeceiving them, if they were deceived, that he rather confirms than denies the sense which they put upon his words. This appears from Matt. ix. 2—5. The people brought to him a man sick of the

<sup>m</sup> Acts xiv. 14, 15.

<sup>n</sup> Acts iii. 11—13.



palsy, to whom, when he healed him, he said, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;' and he perceived that 'certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth,' supposing that 'none had power to forgive sins but God.' The words, it is to be remarked, might have been understood as though he had said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' and as signifying, only in a declarative way, that the man had obtained forgiveness from God; and they might not have been viewed as insinuating that he had power, as a divine Person, to forgive sins. But it is plain, from their charging him with blasphemy, that the Jews understood his words in the latter sense. Yet, instead of rectifying the mistake, if it were one, he asserts that, notwithstanding the meanness of his appearance while in his humbled state on earth, he had power to forgive sins. He not only asserts, but proves this, when he says, 'Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise, and walk?'<sup>o</sup> Many suppose that our Saviour intended in this instance to establish his deity, by asserting his infinite power in working a miracle; and so the meaning of his words was, He that can produce any effect which is above the laws of nature, as miracles are, at least if he does it by his own power, must be God. But this he had done; and so had proved his deity by it, and consequently his right to forgive sins.—It will be objected, however, that as creatures have wrought miracles, which were as truly and properly so as this which Christ wrought, the working of a miracle does not prove the divinity of the person that wrought it, unless we could prove that he did it by his own power, and, in consequence, take for granted that he wrought his miracles by his own power. Some have attempted to prove that he wrought his miracles by his own power, from that scripture in which he says, 'He cast out devils by the finger of God,'<sup>p</sup> supposing that by this phrase is meant his own divine power. Others take notice of something peculiar to himself, as they suppose, in the way of his working miracles,—that, in his performing them, he spake and acted like a God. But since neither of these arguments will be reckoned conclusive, I would take a method somewhat different to account for this matter; and that is, that our Saviour first tells the man that his sins were forgiven him, knowing beforehand how his saying so would be resented by the scribes, who would take occasion from it to charge him with blasphemy, and then, to convince them that he was a divine Person, and had power to forgive sin, he wrought a miracle, and so bade the man sick of the palsy 'arise and walk.' Now, though miracles do not, from any visible circumstance contained in them, argue the divinity of the person who works them, yet they effectually prove it when it is the thing contested, and an explicit appeal is made to the divine power to confirm it by miracle. In this case, miracles are an undoubted proof of the deity of him who works them; and they prove it as truly as they prove anything relating to the Christian religion. In this sense, I humbly conceive, Christ proved his deity by miracles. Accordingly, he is elsewhere expressly said to have done this. Concerning his first miracle in Cana of Galilee, it is said, that thereby 'he manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.'<sup>q</sup> Here, by 'his glory,' is doubtless meant his divine glory; for the faith of his disciples, which was consequent on beholding it, was a divine faith. We never read of the glory of Christ, more especially in his humbled state, but it must import the glory of his deity. This his disciples are said, in some measure, to have beheld, when they believed in him. Now, Christ confirmed this by his miracles, in the same way as by means of them he confirmed his mission. By his miracle on the man sick of the palsy, then, he proved his deity, and consequently his right to forgive sin; and, therefore, so far was he from endeavouring to convince the Jews, that they were mistaken in thinking him a divine Person, that he farther inculcated and proved that he was so.

Another conference which our Saviour held with the Jews, is mentioned John v. There we read, that when he had healed a lame man on the sabbath-day, and when 'the Jews sought to slay him,'<sup>r</sup> as a sabbath-breaker, he said, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'<sup>s</sup> On hearing this, they were more enraged, and 'sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.'<sup>t</sup> It is plain

o Verse 5.  
r Verse 16.

p Luke xi. 20.  
s Verse 17.

q John ii. 11.  
t Verse 18.



that they understood his words, as importing that he was equal with God. Indeed they could not do otherwise; for he compares his works with God's, and speaks of himself as working co-ordinately with him. Certainly our works ought not to be mentioned at the same time with God's; and they therefore suppose that he asserted himself to be a divine Person. They supposed also that he repeated his assertion or persisted in it, by calling God his Father,—language which, as they understood it, denoted an equality with him. They hence charged him with blasphemy, and went about to kill him. Now it is certain, that, if he had not been equal with God, he ought to have undeceived them. This he might easily have done, by telling them, 'Though I call God my Father, I intend nothing hereby but that I worship, reverence, and yield obedience to him;' or 'I am his Son, by a special instance of favour, in such a sense as a creature may be; but far be it from me to give you the least occasion to think that I am equal with God, for that would be to rob him of his glory.' Our Saviour, however, is far from denying his equality with the Father, but rather establishes and proves it in the following verses. In some parts of the context, it is true, he ascribes to himself the weakness of a man; and when he does so, he refers to his human nature, which, as well as his divine, is included in his being the Messiah and Mediator. Thus he says, 'The Son,' that is, as man, 'can do nothing of himself;' <sup>u</sup> and, 'The Father sheweth him all things.'<sup>x</sup> But, in other passages, he proves that he had a divine nature, and farther confirms what he had before asserted, namely, that he was equal with God. 'For as the Father,' says he, 'raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.'<sup>y</sup> Observe, he speaks of himself, as having not only divine power, but divine sovereignty; the former, in that he quickeneth; the latter, in that he does it according to his own will or pleasure. Again, he signifies his expectation that 'all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.'<sup>z</sup> Further, while he thus lays claim to divine glory, he ascribes to himself the prerogative of raising the whole world, at the general resurrection, and of determining their state, as to either happiness or misery. 'Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.'<sup>a</sup> We may conclude, therefore, that our Saviour, so far from disclaiming the charge of being equal with God, which they called blasphemy, proves it by additional and more convincing arguments.

Another conference, which he held with the Jews about this matter, we read of in John viii. Taking occasion to speak concerning Abraham, who rejoiced to see his day, he tells them plainly, 'Before Abraham was, I am.'<sup>b</sup> By this he did not intend, as the Arians suppose, that he was the first creature, but that he was equal with God. Indeed, there seems to be something in his mode of speaking which argues his asserting his eternal and unchangeable deity. The phrase used is the same, with a little variation, as that which is elsewhere used to set forth the eternity and immutability of God, 'Before the day was, I am he.'<sup>c</sup> If the prophet is to be understood, as asserting that God the Father existed before time, 'before the day was,' or the course of nature began, why may we not suppose our Saviour to mean the same thing regarding himself, when he says, 'before Abraham was, I am?' As it will be objected, however, that this is, at best, but a probable argument, though it is such as many of the Fathers have made use of in defending his deity, we will not lay the whole stress of our cause upon it; but may observe, that whatever critical remark others may make on the sense of the words, it is certain the Jews understood them no otherwise than as implying that he thought himself equal with God. Accordingly, it is said, that 'they took up stones to cast at him.'<sup>d</sup> This was a punishment inflicted, under the law, on blasphemers; and ought he not, had they misunderstood his words, to have cleared himself from the imputation, if he had not been equal with God? But he is far from doing this; for it is

u John v. 19.  
a Verses 28 29

x Verse 20.  
b Verse 53.

y Verse 21.  
c Isa. xliii. 13.

z Verse 23.  
d Verse 59.

said, in the following words, that 'he hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.'

There is still another conference, which he held with the Jews, in which he speaks like a divine Person. This is recorded in the tenth chapter of John. In the fourteenth verse, he says, 'I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.' Here he claims to himself the same character which the psalmist ascribes to God, 'The Lord is my Shepherd;'<sup>e</sup> and he also lays claim to his church, whom he calls his sheep, his own sheep. In the eighteenth verse, he speaks of himself as having power over his own life, 'I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' This is a greater instance of dominion than belongs to a creature, who has not a power to dispose of his own life at pleasure. In the twenty-eighth verse, he ascends yet higher in his expression, and speaks of himself as having power 'to give eternal life' to his people. This certainly is the gift of none but God. And while, in the twenty-ninth verse, he owns himself, as man, to be inferior to his Father, he, notwithstanding, plainly asserts his deity in the verse following, and says, 'I and my Father are one.'—The Anti-trinitarians object, that Christ did not speak of himself as one with the Father, any otherwise than in consent, or, at least, as having power and authority derived from him. But to say that these words, 'I and my Father are one,' imply nothing more than that they are one in consent, does not well agree with the sense of the foregoing words, in which he speaks of the greatness and the power of his Father, and of his being one with him in these. Besides, as to his being one with him only in consent, as implying the subjection of all the powers and faculties of his soul to him, every good man may be said to be one with God. Had he meant that he was one with him only in this sense, the Jews would not have charged him with blasphemy. But it is plain that they did charge him with it, and took up stones to stone him for it. His own words, therefore, must have given them ground to conclude that he claimed to be one in nature with God.—But it is farther objected, that though the Jews misunderstood him, nothing can be inferred from their stupidity, to prove his deity. It is alleged also, that, in the following verses, he did more to undeceive them than he had done in some other instances; for he tells them plainly the reason why he spake of himself as a God, namely, that he was a prophet, and he asks them, If 'those were called gods to whom the word of God came,' had not he a right to be so called, from his being 'sanctified, and sent into the world?' We reply, that, by these expressions, he does not intend to set himself upon a level with the prophets of old; but they contain an argument from the less to the greater. The meaning of them is as if he had said, 'If some persons, who made a considerable figure in the church of old, and were sent about important services, are called gods, I have much more reason to claim that character, as having been sanctified, and sent into the world about the great work of redemption,—consecrated, or set apart, to glorify by it the divine perfections.' This work, as will be observed under a following head, proves his deity; and we are therefore not to suppose that he disclaims deity when he speaks of himself, as engaged in it. Besides, he proceeds to assert again his deity, when he speaks of his 'being in the Father, and the Father in him.' These words, it is certain, the Jews understood in a very different sense from that in which they are applied to creatures. They concluded, that he spake of himself as a divine Person; for it follows, that 'they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hand.'<sup>f</sup> He still, therefore, gave them occasion to conclude, that he was God equal with the Father.

Thus he asserted his deity in all these conferences with the Jews. And had he not been what they apprehended him to insinuate that he was, many charges must have been brought against him. Not only would he have been viewed as violating common prudence, by incensing the people by ambiguous expressions, and thereby hazarding his own life; but his holiness would have been called in question, had he given occasion to them to think that he assumed to himself divine glory, had he not had a right to it.

This leads us to consider that last public testimony which he gave to his deity,



in the presence of the Sanhedrim, which, in some respects, may be said to have cost him his life, when he stood before Pontius Pilate. On this occasion, the apostle says, that 'he witnessed a good confession.'<sup>g</sup> This we have recorded in Matt. xxvi. 61. When false witnesses were suborned to testify against him, who contradicted one another in their evidence, and when the high priest desired that he would make a reply to what they said, in his own defence, he did not think their statements worthy of an answer, and held his peace. But when he was asked, in the most solemn manner, and adjured, by the living God, to tell them, 'whether he were the Christ, the Son of God?' that is, the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, who governed his church of old, and whom they acknowledged to be a divine Person, or the Son of God,—the whole matter was left to his own determination. Had he denied this, he would have saved his life; and, if he confessed it, he was likely to die for it. On this occasion, he does not hold his peace, or refuse to answer; but replies, 'Thou hast said.'<sup>h</sup> This is as if he had said, 'It is as thou hast said; I am the Christ, the Son of God.' Then he adds, 'Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' The high priest now rent his clothes, and appealed to the people, that they had heard his blasphemy; and accordingly they judged him worthy of death. Here we observe, that he not only asserts himself to be the Son of God, and to have a right to the glory of a divine Person, but, as a farther confirmation, applies to himself a text which the Jews supposed to belong to the Messiah, 'I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one, like the son of man, came with the clouds of heaven,'<sup>i</sup> &c. From all this, it follows, that if Christ, when he conversed occasionally with the Jews, or when he was called before the Sanhedrim, asserted himself to be the Son of God, which includes in it his deity, and so does not shun to speak of himself as equal with God, we have the doctrine which we are defending maintained by himself. We must conclude, therefore, that he really is what he declared himself to be, namely, God equal with the Father.

*Proofs of Christ's Deity from his Perfections.*

We proceed now to consider how our Saviour's deity appears, from those attributes ascribed to him, which are proper to God only, and from his high and glorious titles. The attributes of God, as was formerly observed,<sup>k</sup> are all essential to him, and therefore cannot, in a proper sense, be ascribed to a creature, as they are to Christ. This will be particularly considered in some following sections.

1. One divine attribute ascribed to him is eternity. He is said to be, not only without end, as the angels and saints in heaven shall be, but from everlasting. This appears from Micah v. 2, 'Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' If his goings forth have been from everlasting, then he existed from everlasting; for action supposes existence. Nothing more than this can be said to prove that the Father was from everlasting. That this is spoken of our Saviour, is very plain from the reference to this text in Matt. ii. 6. There the former part of the verse is quoted, and explained as signifying our Saviour's being born in Bethlehem. Hence the latter part of it, 'whose goings forth,' &c. must relate to him. Again, he is said to have been 'in the beginning.'<sup>l</sup> Observe, it is not said he was *from*, but *in*, the beginning. It is plain, therefore, that he existed when all things began to be, and consequently was from eternity.

When we consider this divine perfection as belonging to our Saviour, we oppose both the Socinians and Arians. As to the former, they deny that he had any existence, properly speaking, before his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and interpret all those scriptures which speak of his pre-existence, such as, 'Before Abraham was, I am,'<sup>m</sup> and 'The Word was in the beginning,' as importing, either that he was from eternity, in the decree or purpose of God relating to his incarnation,—a sense in which every thing that comes to pass, as fore-ordained by God, was eternal, and which is a very absurd exposition of such texts; or that he

g 1 Tim. vi. 13.  
k Eccl. Quest. vii.

h Matt. xxvi. 64.  
l John i. 1.

i Dan. vii. 13.  
m John viii. 58.



was from eternity as being the Founder of the gospel-state. This, however, cannot be the sense of the evangelist's words; for Christ is said to be 'with God,' and it is added, 'and all things were made by him,'—words which every unprejudiced reader would suppose to describe the creation of the world, and not the erecting of the gospel-dispensation. The Socinian interpretation evidently appears, therefore, to be a perversion of the sense of the text. As to the Arians, they distinguish between Christ's being in the beginning of time, and his being from eternity; and they suppose the meaning of the text, 'The Word was from the beginning,' to be, He was from the beginning of time. Whatever disguise they seem to put upon their mode of speaking, when they say there was not a point of time in which Christ was not, or that he was before the world, they are far from asserting that he was without beginning, or properly from eternity. Now, let it be considered, that we cannot conceive of any medium between time and eternity. Whatever was before time, must be from eternity, in the same sense in which God is eternal. Time is the measure of finite beings. It is hence very absurd, and little less than a contradiction, to say that there was any finite being produced before time. This is, in effect, to assert that a limited duration is antecedent to that measure whereby it is determined or limited. If we suppose some things to have been created before God began to create the heavens and the earth, though these things might be said to have had a being longer than time has had, yet they could not have existed before time, for time would have begun with them. Had Christ been created a thousand millions of ages before the world, it could not be said that he existed before time; but it would be inferred that time, which would have taken its beginning from his existence, had continued so many ages. That which existed before time, therefore, must have existed before all finite beings, and consequently was not produced out of nothing, or did not begin to be, and is properly from eternity. I cannot but think that the Arian objection is evasive, or a fruitless attempt to take off the force of this argument for our Saviour's deity; for the expressions of scripture by which his eternity is set forth, are as strong and emphatic as those whereby the Father's is expressed, and consequently his deity is equally evident.

2. Again, our Saviour is said to be unchangeable. This perfection not only belongs to God, but is that whereby he is considered as opposed to all created beings,—which are dependent upon him, and therefore changed by him, at his pleasure. Now that Christ is immutable, is evident from the words of the psalmist: 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.'<sup>n</sup> These words are quoted by the apostle Paul,<sup>o</sup> and applied by him to Christ. It will hence be a very hard matter for any to evade the force of this argument. I am persuaded, that if the apostle had not applied these words to Christ, the Anti-trinitarians would have allowed that the psalmist gives as plain an account of the immutability of God, as can be found in scripture, or, indeed, as words can express. Some of their writers have passed over this scripture, thinking, I suppose, that it is better not to attempt to account for it consistently with their scheme, than to do it in such a way as will not in the least support it. Others are not willing to acknowledge that the words are applied to Christ; alleging that such an application of them would break the chain of the apostle's reasoning, and fasten an absurdity upon it. But by attending to the connection between this and the foregoing verses, it will evidently appear that our Saviour is the person here described as unchangeable. The design of the chapter is to set forth the mediatorial glory of Christ,—to establish his superiority to angels; and, after the apostle had referred to that scripture which speaks of the eternity of his kingdom,<sup>p</sup> he speaks of him as unchangeable, and so applies to him the words of the psalmist.<sup>q</sup>—We may observe also, that he is said to be unchangeable, not only as to his existence, but as to his duration. This farther confirms what was observed under the last head,—that he is eternal as God is, or is without succession, as well as from everlasting. This seems to be asserted

<sup>n</sup> Psal. cii. 25—27.

<sup>o</sup> Heb. ii. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Verse 6.

<sup>q</sup> Psal. xlv.

in that expression, 'Thou art the same, thy years shall not fail,' that is, Thy duration does not slide, or pass away by successive moments, as the duration of time and created beings does.

We might quote, as another proof of his unchangeableness, the words of the apostle, that 'he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'<sup>r</sup> These words mean that, throughout all the changes of time, he remains unchangeably the same in his being, and in all the perfections of his divine nature. A late writer<sup>s</sup> supposes the meaning to be nothing but this, that the doctrine of Christ, once taught by the apostles, ought to be preserved unchanged. He says elsewhere,<sup>t</sup> indeed, that it is certainly true that the Person of Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Whether, by 'yesterday,' he means any thing more than a limited duration of time past, which he must do, or else give up the doctrine that he everywhere contends for, I cannot tell. He thinks, however, that this text respects not the Person of Christ, but his doctrine. The principal argument by which he supports his view, is the supposed connection of the text with the foregoing verse; and he would paraphrase the passage thus: 'Have regard to what has been delivered to you by those who have preached the word of God; for though they are no more among you, yet the doctrine they have delivered is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' It seems, however, to be too great a strain on the sense of words, to suppose 'Christ' to import the same with *his doctrine*; and, with submission, I cannot think that this is to be inferred from what goes before, or what follows. The sense seems to be as if the apostle had said, 'Adhere to the doctrines you have formerly received from those who have preached the word of God to you, and be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, so as to change your sentiments with your teachers; for that would not be to act in conformity to Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' He designs to establish their faith from the consideration of Christ's immutability, whatever changes they are liable to from the death of their teachers, or the innovations of those who succeed them, and endeavour to carry them away by divers and strange doctrines. Hence, the text seems to be as plain a proof of our Saviour's immutability, as that scripture is of the immutability of God, in which it is said, 'He is, and was, and is to come.'<sup>u</sup> If, by his being 'yesterday,' we are to understand, as some do, his managing the affairs of his church under the legal dispensation; and 'to-day,' his governing them under this present dispensation; and 'for ever,' the eternity of his kingdom, the passage plainly proves, that whatever changes he has made in the affairs of the government of the church and of the world, he is himself the same, and consequently a divine person.

3. Another divine attribute ascribed to our Saviour, is omnipresence. In Matth. xviii. 20, he says, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' This expression imports the same thing as that by which, as is allowed by all, the divine omnipresence is set forth, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.'<sup>x</sup> That Christ's presence in the midst of his people, in all places, argues his omnipresence, is very evident. He designs, by this promise, to encourage them in all places, and at all times, to perform religious duties, with an eye to the privilege of enjoying his presence. Hence, wherever there is a worshipping assembly, they have ground to expect that he will be present with them. Now it is certain, that no creature can be in two places at the same time, much less in all places. This is the same as 'to fill heaven and earth,' and is ascribable to God only.<sup>y</sup> Moreover, when Christ says, that he will be with his people in all places, it must be meant that he will be with them at the same time, and not successively, otherwise he could not be wherever two or three are met in his name. This passage, therefore, is a plain proof of his omnipresence, which is an incommunicable perfection of the divine nature, and consequently argues him to be true and proper God.

In order to weaken the force of the argument taken from this scripture, it is objected to the view we have given of it, that our Saviour is here said to be present,

<sup>r</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.  
page 169.

<sup>s</sup> See Dr. Clark's Scripture-doctrine, page 127.  
<sup>u</sup> Rev. i. 4.

<sup>x</sup> Exod. xx. 24.

<sup>t</sup> Reply to Nelson,  
<sup>y</sup> Jer. xxiii. 24.



only by his authority. and that, accordingly, his words are to be understood in a metaphorical sense, as when a king is said to be present in all parts of his dominions, where persons, who are deputed to represent him, act by his authority. Now, though we allow that whatever is done in Christ's name, must be said to be done by his authority, yet we cannot allow that his being in the midst of them is to be understood only of his being so by his authority. We must not suppose that our Saviour, in these words, makes use of a tautology. Indeed, it would be a very jejune and empty way of speaking to say, 'Where two or three are met together in my name, that is, by my authority, there am I in the midst of them, by my authority.' Certainly, Christ's being in the midst of them, must be taken in the same sense as the parallel scripture before referred to,<sup>z</sup> where God's 'coming to his people' in those places where he records his name, is explained as having a very great privilege attending it, namely, his 'blessing them,'—which he is said to do, when he confers blessedness upon them, and gives them a full and rich supply of all their wants. This must be the sense of our Saviour's being in the midst of his people. Moreover, as God is said to be present where he acts, so Christ's powerful influence, granted to his people in all places, which supposes his omnipresence, implies a great deal more than his being present by his authority. If that were the only sense in which this scripture is to be understood, it might as well be alleged, that all the scriptures which speak of the divine omnipresence, might be taken in that sense; and this would be to set aside all the proofs we have of this perfection of the divine nature. This objection, therefore, seems to be rather an evasion than an argument.

Others suppose that Christ, being in the midst of his people, when met together in his name, implies nothing more than his knowing what they do when engaged in acts of religious worship. Yet they who make use of this objection in order to impugn the argument which is brought to prove his deity from his omnipresence, will, for argument's sake, allow him to be omniscient, not considering, that, as will be shown in our next particular, that equally proves him to be a divine Person. To prove that Christ's being present with his people, is to be understood of his knowing what they do, they refer to the text<sup>a</sup> in which Elisha says to Gehazi, as knowing what he had done, when he followed Naaman, the Syrian, for a reward, 'Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?' But as this scripture signifies nothing else but that this secret was revealed to him, which is, in a figurative way of speaking, as though he had been present with Gehazi, it will not follow that the prophet pretended to know whatever was done in all places, and at all times. Such knowledge as this, as will be farther observed in our next particular, is more than what seems communicable to any creature. But this is intended by Christ's knowing all things; and more than this, doubtless, is meant by his being in the midst of his people. When he speaks of the latter, he encourages them to expect from him those blessings which they stand in need of; and he, consequently, promises to be with them in a way of grace. And certainly he that is so present with his people, must be concluded to be, in the most proper sense, a divine Person.

There is another scripture which is generally brought to prove Christ's omnipresence, and consequently his proper deity, namely, John iii. 13: 'And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.' To understand these words, we must consider their connection with what goes immediately before. Thus, by 'No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven,' it is plain our Saviour means, that no man, but he that came down from heaven, has a full and comprehensive knowledge of heavenly things. Of this he had been speaking in the foregoing verse. There he asserts his divine omniscience,<sup>b</sup> as the Person, according to a description elsewhere given of him, 'in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' He says that none knows the mysteries which are hid in God, but he who is in the bosom of the Father, and who came down from heaven,—or, as the apostle expresses it, who is 'the Lord from heaven.'<sup>c</sup> Then, as a farther proof of

<sup>z</sup> Exod. xx. 24.    <sup>a</sup> 2 Kings v. 26.    <sup>b</sup> See a parallel scripture, Prov. xxx. 2, 3.    <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 47.



his deity, he adds, that 'he is in heaven;' that is, while he was on earth, in one nature, as being omnipresent, he was in heaven in the other nature. Agreeably to this sense of the passage, he is said to 'come down from heaven;' because his divine nature manifested its glory here on earth, when the human nature was united to it. This is the only sense in which God is said to come down into this lower world. We have the same mode of speaking in Gen. xi. 7, Exod. iii. 8, and other places. If, then, Christ is thus omnipresent, we must conclude that he is a divine Person.

The Arians give a very different sense of this text, especially those words, 'The Son of man, who is in heaven.' They suppose that the words ought to be rendered, 'was in heaven;' and that the passage does not argue his omnipresence, but asserts that that nature which they call divine first resided in heaven from the beginning, when it was produced by the Father, and afterwards was said to come down from thence in his incarnation. But, before we allow of this sense of the text, they must prove that Christ was the first creature; that, in a finite nature, he resided in heaven till his incarnation; and that he afterwards, by a change of place, descended into this lower world. Even if they could make this appear, there is still, as they understand the words, a difficulty in the passage. It is not usual to say, 'I came from a place, and was in that place before I came from it.' Whether their exposition of the words, or ours, be most proper, I leave any one to judge. As for the Socinians who deny that Christ had any existence before his incarnation, they are very much at a loss to account for the sense of this scripture. Socinus himself, and many of his followers, have concluded from it, that Christ was taken up into heaven some time after his incarnation; and they suppose this to have happened during some part of the forty days in which the scripture says he was in the wilderness tempted of the devil. But how he could ascend into heaven, and yet be in the wilderness, where one of the evangelists says he was all the forty days,<sup>d</sup> cannot be easily understood or accounted for. Indeed, the scripture is altogether silent as to such a matter; and it is very strange, if it had occurred, that when we have an account of other circumstances in his life which are of less importance, no mention should be made of this, which, had it been related, would have been a great inducement to his followers to have paid the highest regard to his doctrine,—especially as the Socinians suppose he was taken up into heaven, that he might be instructed in those things which he was to impart to the world. Instead of offering proof, they only say that it is a parallel instance to that of Moses, who was called up to the top of Mount Sinai, which was then the immediate seat of the divine presence, and who there received the law which he was to impart to Israel. They suppose that it was, in like manner, necessary that our Saviour should ascend into heaven, that he might there be instructed in that doctrine which he was to communicate to his church. We cannot, however, but conclude that, being omniscient, as will be proved in our next particular, and having, in his human nature, had an unction from the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as 'God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him,'<sup>e</sup> he had no need to receive instructions, or to ascend into heaven to receive the doctrines which he was to deliver. Moreover, according to the Socinian conjecture, his coming from heaven, in the end of time, to judge the world, should have been called his third coming. His first coming from heaven was in his incarnation; and, according to this conjecture, his second coming was his return to the world after he ascended into heaven during the period of his temptation. But, according to scripture, his coming at the end of the world is called, 'his coming the second time, without sin, unto salvation.'<sup>f</sup> Indeed, the supposition in question is so ungrounded, that some of the Socinians themselves reckon it, at most, but a probable conjecture, and do not pretend to say that it is sufficiently founded in scripture. We cannot think, therefore, that it will have any tendency to enervate the force of our argument for Christ's deity, founded on the above-mentioned sense of the text: 'The Son of man, which is in heaven.'

4. Our Saviour's deity may farther be proved, from his being omniscient. The apostle Peter says, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.'<sup>g</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Mark i. 13.

<sup>e</sup> John iii. 34.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. ix. 28.

<sup>g</sup> John xxi. 17.

This is too great a glory to be ascribed to any creature. Had it been spoken of the Father, the Anti-trinitarians themselves would have acknowledged, that it is as great a proof of his deity as any contained in scripture. It imports the same thing as what the psalmist says, 'His understanding is infinite.'<sup>h</sup>—There is, however, another expression which abundantly asserts the divine omniscience; it is that in which he is denominated the searcher of hearts. This is a glory which God appropriates to himself, 'I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways.'<sup>i</sup> 'The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.'<sup>k</sup> All creatures are excluded from having any branch of this glory, when it is said, 'Thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men.'<sup>l</sup> Now such a knowledge as this is ascribed to Christ. Sometimes he is said to know the inward thoughts and secret reasonings of men within themselves.<sup>m</sup> If it be said, that this is only a particular instance of knowledge, such as he might have had by an immediate divine inspiration, and therefore does not prove his Godhead, there is a scripture which speaks of his knowledge as more extensive, asserting, that he knows the thoughts of all men, 'He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.'<sup>n</sup> Another scripture asserts that his knowledge respects not only men's present, but their future thoughts, which are not known to themselves, 'He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.'<sup>o</sup> But if all this be not reckoned sufficient to prove him to be the heart-searching God, nothing can express it in plainer terms than the following text, 'All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.'<sup>p</sup>

It is objected to the argument for Christ's omniscience, taken from Peter's confession, 'Lord, thou knowest all things,' &c. that nothing more is intended by the words, than that he had a very great degree of knowledge,—not that he was strictly and properly omniscient. The words are thus supposed to be an hyperbolical expression, not altogether unlike that of the woman of Tekoa to David, 'My Lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.'<sup>q</sup> This expression of the woman, it is true, is either an unwarrantable strain of compliment or flattery, occasioned by David's suspecting that Joab had employed her to plead the cause of Absalom; or it is a sincere acknowledgment of his great wisdom, without supposing him to be absolutely omniscient,—as if she had said, 'Thou knowest all things that are done in the land; there is no plot or contrivance, how secretly soever it may be managed, but thou wilt, some way or other, find it out, as thou hast done this that I am sent about.' But what reference has this to Peter's confession? Does it follow, that because there are hyperbolical expressions in scripture, as well as in other writings, this must be one? or because a wise governor may have a conjectural knowledge of what is done by his subjects, when considering the various circumstances which attend their actions, that the apostle intends nothing more than such a conjectural knowledge? It is plain he appeals to Christ as the heart-searching God, concerning the inward sincerity of his love to him, as well as of his repentance, after a public and shameful denial of him, which might have given just occasion for his love being called in question; and his confession is as evident a proof of Christ's omniscience, as that text is of the Father's, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me,'<sup>r</sup> &c.

Others, especially some of the Arians, do not so much deny Christ's omniscience, as the consequence deduced from it, namely, his proper deity. They make use of an abstruse and metaphysical way of reasoning. They suppose that a creature may know all things, that is, all finite objects, and consequently all things that are done in the world, namely, all creatures, and all their actions; since the object of this knowledge is, at most, but finite. They suppose, also, that it is possible for a finite mind to be so enlarged as to take in all finite things, or to have the knowledge of all things communicated to it; since the object and the recipient are commen-

<sup>h</sup> Psal. cxlvii. 5.    <sup>i</sup> Jer. xvii. 10.    <sup>k</sup> 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.    <sup>l</sup> 1 Kings viii. 39.    <sup>m</sup> Mark ii. 8.  
<sup>n</sup> John ii. 25.    <sup>o</sup> John vi. 64.    <sup>p</sup> Rev. i. 23.    <sup>q</sup> 2 Sam. xiv. 20.    <sup>r</sup> Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24



surate with each other. They, hence, admit that our Saviour may know all things, and yet deny that his understanding is infinite, or that his knowledge is so properly divine as the Father's is; and they, therefore, regard his knowing all things as not a sufficient argument to prove his deity, in the sense in which we understand it. Now this method of reasoning might as well be used to evade the force of every argument, brought from scripture, to prove the Father's omniscience, or, indeed, to prove his infinite power. All effects produced, which are the objects of power, are but finite; and it might, hence, according to this way of reasoning, be inferred, that the producing of all things does not require infinite power, or prove God's eternal power and Godhead. Moreover, as this would tend to destroy the infinite disproportion between God and the creature in acting; so it supposes that God can communicate a branch of his own glory to a creature, by enlarging it to such a degree, as to take in all finite objects. There are some things not so properly too great for God to do, as for a creature to be the subject of. We do not pretend to set limits to the divine power; yet we may infer, from the nature of things, and the powers of finite beings, that it is impossible for any one, below God, to know all things past, present, and to come, at one view. Yet this, our Saviour must be supposed to do; else the attribute of omniscience is not justly applied to him, nor, as will be observed in a following particular, would he be fit to govern the world. We must conclude, therefore, that he is truly and properly a divine Person.

To what has been said concerning Christ's omniscience, we may subjoin those scriptures which speak of him as 'the wisdom of God,' the fountain of all communicated wisdom, 'the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'<sup>s</sup> It is supposed by many, that 'Wisdom,' spoken of in Prov. viii. is to be understood of our Saviour, as the personal wisdom of God; inasmuch as there are several personal characters ascribed to him. Thus it is said, 'I was set up from everlasting,'<sup>t</sup> &c., and, 'Then,' that is, before the creation of all things, 'I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.'<sup>u</sup> This cannot, properly speaking, be applied to God's essential wisdom; and must therefore be a description of an eternal divine Person, distinct from the Father. Many suppose, indeed, that whatever is spoken of Wisdom, in this and some other chapters of this book, is only metaphorical, or a beautiful description of divine wisdom, as the instructor of mankind. But we cannot see how this, if nothing else be intended by it, can agree with some of the personal characters before-mentioned, which seem applicable to our Saviour. We find also that he is elsewhere called 'the Wisdom God,' in a sense which can by no means be supposed to be figurative. Thus, the words, 'Therefore also said the Wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles,'<sup>x</sup> &c. are certainly understood of our Saviour. If it be objected, that, by 'the Wisdom of God,' is meant there the wise God, namely, the Father, we answer, that another evangelist, referring to the very same thing, explains what is meant by 'the Wisdom of God,' and represents our Saviour as speaking in his own Person, 'Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes,'<sup>y</sup> &c.

5. The next divine perfection which we notice as ascribed to Christ, is almighty power. This attribute is appropriated, by the Arians, to the Father.<sup>z</sup> They accordingly suppose that it implies his supremacy not only over all creatures, but over the Son and Holy Ghost. They hence peremptorily conclude that it is never applied to them, and consequently that the deity of our Saviour cannot be proved by it. That they may turn our own weapons upon us, or improve some unwary concessions made by some very considerable writers who have, in other respects, very well defended the doctrine of the Trinity, they seem to insinuate, that their view of the subject is a matter to be, as it were, taken for granted. Yet it might easily be made appear, that they strain, beyond what was ever intended, the sense of those expressions whence they conclude the cause to have been given up to them; and, besides, there are many Trinitarian writers who are far from making such concessions as those on which they rely.

<sup>s</sup> John i. 9.<sup>t</sup> Prov. viii. 23.<sup>u</sup> Ver. 30, 31.<sup>x</sup> Luke xi. 49.<sup>y</sup> Matt. xxiii. 34.<sup>z</sup> See Dr. Clark's Scripture-doctrine, p. 63.



As for the word παντοκρατωρ, 'Almighty,' there is nothing in the derivation of it, whence it may justly be inferred, that the perfection denoted by it contains a greater display of the divine glory, than the other perfections which are attributed to all the Persons in the Godhead. It contains, indeed, an idea of the universal extent of divine power, with respect to its objects; and this is not to be separated from the sense of it, when power is ascribed to God in those scriptures in which he is called 'the Almighty.' If, therefore, we can prove that Christ has ascribed to him power which is properly divine, this will evince his deity, as much as though we could produce several scriptures in which he is indisputably called 'the Almighty.' This we shall first endeavour to do, and then we shall inquire whether we have not as much or more reason to conclude that he is called Almighty, than the Anti-trinitarians have to deny it.

That power, such as is properly divine, is attributed to Christ, may be proved from the scripture formerly mentioned, which is evidently applied to him, and in which he is called, 'the mighty God.'<sup>a</sup> This point may be proved also from Psal. xlv. 3, which, as has been before observed, is spoken concerning him, and in which he is called 'most mighty.' It may further be proved from Phil. iii. 21, where we read of his 'changing our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' This is such an effect of power as plainly argues it divine, as much as the production of all things out of nothing could do. Accordingly, it is said to be done, 'according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' We might observe many other things which he has done, and will do, which require infinite power; but these we shall have occasion to consider, when, under a following head, we prove his deity from his works.

All this, however, is to no purpose with those who deny his proper deity, unless we can prove that he is called 'Almighty.' They lay the whole stress of the argument upon this, for no other reason, as I presume, but because they think it impossible for us to prove it. I shall attempt it; and I hope to make it appear that we have greater probability, on our side, that he is so called, than they have ground to deny it. Here I shall take notice of this perfection of the divine nature, as we find it mentioned in the book of Revelation, in which this attribute is mentioned nine times, and, in some places, seems to be applied to the Father, but in others to the Son.

The first we shall mention is in chap. i. 8, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.' This seems to be spoken of our Saviour; because he is described at large in the three foregoing verses. There is nothing which gives the least ground to question its application to him, unless that character's being given to the Person here spoken of, which is given to the Father, namely, 'Which is, and which was, and which is to come.'<sup>b</sup> But we find, in other scriptures, the same divine glories ascribed to the Son that had before been ascribed to the Father. In John v. 21, it is said, 'As the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;' and in Tit. iii. 4, the Father is called 'God our Saviour,' as appears by comparing it with the fifth and sixth verses, while Christ is so called in the same epistle.<sup>c</sup> Why, then, may not the Father and the Son be each described by this character, 'which was, is, and is to come,'—especially if we consider that the ascribing of this to Christ is, in effect, the same as what is said of him elsewhere, 'He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?'<sup>d</sup>—That the text in question in which the person spoken of is called 'Almighty,' is applied to Christ, appears farther from the fact that the character, 'Alpha and Omega,' seems to be applied to none but him. In the other place where it is used in this chapter, namely, in the eleventh verse, it is indisputably applied to him; as will appear by comparing it with the following verses. In chap. xxi. 6. he is again called 'Alpha and Omega;' and that the name is applied to him there, appears from the context. It is he who 'makes all things new,' or puts a new face upon the affairs of his church; and it is he who commands John to write what he saw and heard: 'He said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful.'<sup>e</sup> We may

<sup>a</sup> Isa. ix. 6.<sup>b</sup> Rev. i. 4.<sup>c</sup> Tit. ii. 10, 13.<sup>d</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.<sup>e</sup> Rev. xxi. 5.

observe, that wherever John is commanded, in this book, to write, it is Christ that gives the command. Thus he said to him before, 'Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.'<sup>f</sup> Again, John is commanded by him who is called the Son of man, to write, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'<sup>g</sup> Further, in chap. xxii. 13. he is called 'Alpha and Omega,' who is described in the foregoing verse, as 'coming quickly, whose reward is with him.' This is undoubtedly meant of our Saviour; for it is said concerning him, 'Surely I come quickly. Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus.'<sup>h</sup> Now that which I infer is, that if Christ be styled 'Alpha and Omega,' in all other places in this book, it is more than probable that he is so in the eighth verse of the first chapter, in which he is said to be 'the Almighty.' And as he is called the 'Alpha and Omega,' so the explanation of the title, wherever we meet with it in this book without the words themselves, is applied to Christ. Thus he is called, 'The first and the last';<sup>i</sup> and, 'The beginning of the creation of God.'<sup>k</sup> From these facts, I humbly conceive we have more ground to conclude that Christ is called 'the Almighty' in the verse in question, than the Arians have to deny it.

There is another place in this book where he seems to be styled 'the Almighty.' 'And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.'<sup>l</sup> This triumphant song is occasioned by one of the greatest victories which the church expects to obtain in this world. By 'the song of Moses,' I humbly conceive, is meant the church's celebrating the glory of God, for the greatest victory that ever was obtained under the legal dispensation; and 'the song of the Lamb,' is an acknowledgment of the greatest that is, or shall be, obtained under the gospel-dispensation. Now, in celebrating the Lamb's victories, they set forth the praises of this mighty Conqueror in the following words, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty.' It is the Lamb that is everywhere described in this book, as fighting the church's battles, and obtaining victory for it; therefore it is his glory which is here set forth.

And as he is always described, in this book, as thus fighting the church's battles, so it is he who is described as taking vengeance on its enemies. I cannot but conclude, therefore, that he is spoken of in chap. xvi. 6. where he is said to have given his church's persecutors 'blood to drink, for they were worthy;' and in the following verse, where it is said to him, 'Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.' Again, in chap. xvi. 14. we read of the 'battle of that great day of God Almighty;' and then it immediately follows, 'Behold, I come as a thief in the night,' &c. Now, this expression is known to be elsewhere applied to our Saviour, and to none but him. And that it is he who fights the church's battles, is evident from chap. xvii. 14, 'These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them;' and, from chap. xix. 12, &c., as elsewhere, where it is said, 'His eyes were as a flame of fire,'<sup>m</sup> to denote that the great day of his wrath was come. His name is called, in the thirteenth verse of the nineteenth chapter, 'the Word of God;' and we read that 'armies followed him,' and that 'out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that he might smite the nations.' We may hence conclude, that since Christ is represented, in so many places in this book, as fighting with, and triumphing and reigning over, his enemies, inflicting his plagues upon them, and delivering his church from their persecutions, which is a work of divine power, he is fitly styled, in several places, 'Lord God Almighty.'

6. We might consider several other divine attributes ascribed to Christ, which prove his deity, namely, holiness, truth, and faithfulness. Thus it is said, 'These things saith he that is holy, he that is true;'<sup>n</sup> and he is described, in the following words, as having uncontrollable power: 'who openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.' That this is spoken of Christ, is beyond dispute. Again, 'They cried out, with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'<sup>o</sup> To whom did they cry but to the Lamb, who is said to have opened the seals, or to

f Rev. i. 19.

i Chap. i. 17; ii. 8.

m Chap. i. 14.

g Chap. xiv. 13.

k Chap. iii. 14.

n Chap. iii. 7.

h Chap. xxii. 20.

l Chap. xv. 3.

o Chap. vi. 10.

have discovered the mysteries that were thereby revealed?<sup>p</sup> When he had opened the sixth seal, he is described as hearing his church's prayer, and avenging their blood; and so is represented as coming to judgment in a very awful and terrible manner. On this occasion it is said, 'the great day of his wrath is come;' and therefore it is he who is described as 'holy and true.' If it be replied, that creatures are sometimes called holy and true, we may add, that it is Christ to whom it is said, 'Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest.'<sup>q</sup> This I infer from what has been before considered,—that it is he who obtains victory over, and pours forth his judgments on, his church's enemies; and that it is he whose praises are celebrated in the song of the Lamb, mentioned in the verse immediately preceding.

We have thus considered several divine perfections, as ascribed to our Saviour, and these so glorious, that nothing greater can be mentioned to set forth the glory of a divine Person. We may add a view of those glorious titles which are given him with a design to excite in us adoring and admiring thoughts of him. Amongst these we shall only mention some which are either the same with, or are equivalent to, those which are given to the Father; which they, who deny Christ's deity, cannot but own to be distinguishing characters of a divine Person.—Is the Father styled 'The God of peace?'<sup>r</sup> Our Saviour is styled 'The Prince of peace.'<sup>s</sup> He is also said to be 'our peace';<sup>t</sup> and as peace includes in it all the blessings which accompany salvation, Christ's being styled the Author of it denotes him to be the Fountain of blessedness,—which he could not be were he not a divine Person.—Again, as God is called 'a Sun and Shield';<sup>u</sup> so Christ is called 'The Sun of righteousness,'<sup>x</sup> and 'An hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'<sup>y</sup>—Again, is it said of God the Father, 'He is thy life, and the length of thy days?'<sup>z</sup> Our Saviour says, concerning himself, that he is 'the life.'<sup>a</sup> He is also called 'the Prince of life,'<sup>b</sup> and 'our life.'<sup>c</sup>—Again, is the Father called 'The Shepherd of Israel?'<sup>d</sup> Christ is called 'That great Shepherd of the sheep.'<sup>e</sup>—Moreover, is God often described in scripture as a glorious King,—'The King of Israel, even the Lord in the midst of thee?'<sup>f</sup> Our Saviour is styled 'The King, the Lord of Hosts,'<sup>g</sup> 'the King of Israel,'<sup>h</sup> and 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.'<sup>i</sup>—Again, is God styled 'the Hope of Israel?'<sup>k</sup> Our Saviour seems to be so called by the apostle, when he says, 'For the Hope of Israel I am bound with this chain';<sup>l</sup> that is, for Christ's sake, who is the object of his people's hope. But whether Christ is referred to in that scripture or not, he is elsewhere called 'our Hope.'<sup>m</sup>—Moreover, is God the object of desire, as the psalmist says,<sup>n</sup> so that there is nothing in heaven or earth, or within the whole compass of finite beings, that is to be desired besides, or in comparison with, him? Our Saviour is called 'The Desire of all nations.'<sup>o</sup>—I might refer to many other glorious titles that are given to him in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation, in the epistles to the seven churches; every one of which is prefaced with such a character of him as is designed to strike them with a holy reverence and esteem of him as a divine Person. Here, however, I finish my view of those proofs of Christ's deity, which are taken from the names, attributes, and titles, which are given to him.

### *Proofs of Christ's Deity from his Works.*

I shall now proceed to consider those works done by our Saviour, which are proper to God only. Divine works argue a divine agency; they prove that he who performs them has infinite power, and consequently that he is an infinite

p Rev. vi. 1.	q Chap. xv. 4.	r Heb. xiii. 20.	s Isa. ix. 6.	t Eph. ii. 14.
n Psal. lxxxiv. 11.	x Mal. iv. 2.	y Isa. xxxii. 2.	z Deut. xxx. 20.	a John xi.
25. compared with chap. xiv. 6.	b Acts iii. 15.	c Coloss. iii. 4.	d Psal. lxxx. 1.	
e Heb. xiii. 20.	f Zeph. iii. 15.	g Isa. vi. 5.	h John i. 49.	i Rev. xix. 16.
k Jer. xiv. 8.	l Acts xxviii. 20.	m 1 Tim. i. 1. compared with Coloss. i. 27.		
n Psal. lxxiii. 25.	o Hag. ii. 7.			



Person, or truly and properly God. These works are of two sorts; they are either of nature and common providence, or they are of grace, that is, such as immediately respect our salvation. In all of them, Christ acts beyond the power of a creature, and hence appears to be a divine Person.

1. He created all things; and therefore must be God. He that made the world, must be before it; and since time, as has been before observed, began with the first creature, he must have been before time, that is, from eternity. Again, he who created all things must have a sovereign will. 'For his pleasure they are, and were created.'<sup>p</sup> It follows, that he has an undoubted right to all things, and that he might have annihilated them, had it been his pleasure; and also, that he has a right to dispose of them as he will, as the potter has power over his clay. All these things are consequences of the work of creation; and therefore that work is an undeniable argument that he who performed it is God. It may be observed, also, that to create, is to exert infinite power, or to act above the power of a creature, which, at best, is but finite. Now, whatever is more than finite, must be infinite; and consequently he who created all things must exert infinite power, and that is certainly such as is truly divine. We might farther consider, that there are many scriptures which appropriate creation to God. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise; for to suppose that a creature gave being to itself, is to suppose him to be both a cause and an effect, and consequently to be, and not be, at the same time,—to exist as a Creator, and not to exist as to be brought into being. It is evident, also, that in scripture the creature is opposed to the Creator. Thus, it is said, 'They worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.'<sup>q</sup> And there are several scriptures which speak of creation as a distinguishing evidence of divine glory. Thus, we have a magnificent description of God, taken more especially from this work, when he is called, 'The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth.'<sup>r</sup> Again, 'Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.'<sup>s</sup> In these and many other scriptures of a similar nature, which might be referred to, it appears that creation is a work peculiar to God.

We shall now prove that our Saviour created all things. There are many who think that this may be proved from the work of creation being ascribed to more persons than one. In the original, we read of 'Creators,' in the plural number. Thus, 'Remember thy Creator,'<sup>t</sup> or Creators; and, in reference to the creating of man, God says, 'Let us make man after our own image,' &c. These texts seem to imply, that there were more divine Persons engaged in this work than the Father. I do not, indeed, lay so much stress on this argument as many do; yet it is not to be wholly neglected. I confess, I cannot see any reason why there should be such a mode of expression used, were it not to signify the divine mystery of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, to whom this work is ascribed.

The Anti-trinitarians, especially the Socinians, bring an objection, that this mode of speaking is such as is used in conformity to the custom of kings, who speak in the plural number. But though kings do often speak in the plural number, yet this is only a modern way of speaking, implying, that whatever a king does, is by the advice of some of his subjects, who are his peculiar favourites, and who are made use of to fulfil his will. This way of speaking is not so ancient as scripture-times, much less as Moses' time, or the beginning of the world, which is referred to, when God is represented as speaking in the plural number. It is the custom of kings, in scripture, to speak in the singular number; and it is very absurd to pretend to explain any mode of speaking used in scripture, by customs of speech not known till many ages after. I am sensible, some think that the mode of speaking used by Ahasuerus, 'What shall we do unto the queen Vashti, according to law?'<sup>u</sup> is a proof that it was used in former ages. But the words may be rendered, 'What is to be done, according to law?' &c. or, 'What is it expedient for

p Rev. iv. 11.

q Rom. i. 25.  
t Eccl. xii. 1.r Isa. xl. 28.  
u Esth. i. 15.

s Chap. xlii. 5.

me to do?' This instance, therefore, does not prove that kings used, in ancient times, to speak of themselves in the plural number. It cannot, then, be argued that, when God is represented as speaking so in scripture, it is in compliance with any such custom. Besides, in all other instances, except those which are referred to by our argument, he is always represented as speaking in the singular number. It is hence additionally probable, that this variation from his usual way of speaking, is not without some reason, and that it intimates to us the doctrine, that there are more divine Persons than one who created all things. But we shall not insist on this; as we have more plain proofs in scripture.

It evidently appears that Christ made all things, not only from what is said in John i. 3, that 'all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made;' but from Col. i. 16, 'By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.' Here he is said to be not only the Creator, but the end of all things. This is the same as what is said in Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' That Christ created all things, farther appears from Psal. cii. 25, 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.' This text is expressly applied to Christ by the apostle.<sup>y</sup>

From these and similar scriptures, it evidently appears that Christ made all things. The Socinians, indeed, who are sensible that creation was an evident proof of divine power, and that the Creator of all things must be God, labour very hard to prove that all those scriptures which ascribe this work to our Saviour, are to be understood in a metaphorical sense, as signifying nothing else but his being the Author of the gospel-state, which is a kind of new creation, peculiar to him. He did this, as they say, as a prophet, revealing those doctrines which relate to the gospel-dispensation. Accordingly they understand that scripture which speaks of his being 'in the beginning,' and of 'all things being made by him,'<sup>x</sup> as intending nothing else, than that he was in the beginning of the gospel,—that whatever was made or ordained to be a standard and rule of faith was by him,—and that, in the discharge of this work, he was to restore decayed religion, and to correct several mistaken notions which the Jews had entertained concerning the moral law, to add some new precepts to it, and to give directions concerning that mode of worship which should be observed in the church for the future. This is all they suppose to be intended by that work which is ascribed to Christ, as a Creator. In this scripture, on the contrary, it is plainly said, that there was nothing in the whole frame of nature, nothing that was an effect of power, which was made without him. There is another scripture also, which cannot, with any colour of reason, be understood in their sense: 'By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible.'<sup>y</sup> Here the apostle speaks of the creation of angels and men, as well as all other things. Now, certainly, Christ did not come into the world to rectify any mistakes, or restore decayed religion, among the angels. Hence the apostle here plainly proves that our Saviour created all things.

But as this opinion of the Socinians is now almost universally exploded by the Anti-trinitarians, we have no occasion to say any thing farther in opposition to it; and we shall proceed to consider what the Arians say concerning Christ's creating all things. They allow that the work of creation is ascribed to him; but they deny that this argues him to be God in the same sense as the Father is. The account which they give is, that God, namely, the Father, created all things by the Son, as an instrument created by him immediately for that purpose; so that the Son was an inferior or second cause of the production of all things; and, as such, he cannot be concluded to be God, equal with the Father. I shall offer several remarks in opposition to this theory.—First, in this account of creation, there is not a just difference put between the natural and the supernatural production of things; of which the latter only can be called creation. If these two be confounded, the distinguishing character of a Creator is set aside; and the glory arising from it cannot be appropriated to God. Nor is that infinite perfection which is displayed

<sup>v</sup> Heb. i. 10.<sup>x</sup> John i. 2, 3.<sup>y</sup> Col. i. 16.



in creation duly considered; but, according to this scheme, or method of reasoning, a creature may be a Creator, and a Creator a creature. Nor, according to this scheme, can 'the eternal power and Godhead' of the divine Being be demonstrated 'by the things that are made,'<sup>z</sup> or created, as the apostle says they are.—From that first mistake arises another. In natural productions, that which was created by God may be rendered subservient to the production of other things; and, in this respect, it may be termed an instrument made use of by a superior cause, and may have an energy, or method of acting, peculiar to itself, whereby it produces effects, according to the course and laws of nature, fixed by God, the first cause of all things. From this they suppose, though without sufficient ground, that God might create all things by an instrument, or second cause, as they conclude he did by the Son.—Now, we must assert that, creation being a supernatural production of things, what has been said concerning natural production is not applicable to it.—Though things may be produced in a natural way by second causes, whose powers are limited and subjected to the laws of nature, yet supernatural effects cannot be produced by anything short of infinite power. Hence, as creation is a supernatural work, it must be concluded to be a work of infinite power.—It follows, that it is not agreeable to the idea of creation, or the producing of all things out of nothing, for God to make use of an instrument. That this may appear, let it be considered, that whatever instrument is made use of, must be either finite or infinite. An infinite instrument cannot be made use of; for then there would be two infinities, the one superior, the other inferior. Nor can a finite one be made use of; for that, according to our last proposition, cannot produce any supernatural effect, as creation is supposed to be. That work requires infinite power, and this cannot be exerted by a finite medium. Hence, no finite instrument can be used. Moreover, if it requires infinite power to create all things, this power, in its method of acting, would be limited by the instrument it makes use of; for whatever power a superior cause has in himself, the effect produced by an instrument will be in proportion to the weakness thereof. This some illustrate by the similitude of a giant's making use of a straw or a reed in striking a blow, when the weakness of the instrument renders the power of the person who uses it insignificant. Thus, if God the Father had made use of a creature in the creation of all things, the power exerted by him could be no other than finite; but that was not sufficient for the production of things supernatural,—which require infinite power.—Again, the creation of all things is ascribed to the sovereignty of the divine will. The psalmist, describing it, says, 'He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast';<sup>a</sup> and it is recorded, 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.'<sup>b</sup> When we read that the other parts of the creation were produced by his almighty word, this implies that they were produced by an act of his will. Now, it seems impossible, from the nature of the thing, that an instrument should be made use of in an act of willing, any more than in an act of understanding.—Moreover, no cause can reasonably be assigned, why God should make use of an instrument in the production of all things. Certainly he who, by his immediate power, produced the instrument, might, without any difficulty or absurdity attending the supposition, have created all things immediately without one. We must suppose, too, that if there were nothing in the nature of things which required him to make use of an instrument, he would not, by making use of one, namely, the Son, administer occasion to him for his assuming so great a branch of his own glory as that of being the Creator of the ends of the earth, or for his being, as the result of this, worshipped as a divine Person.

But, say the Arians, though no one supposes that God stood in need of an instrument, or could not have created all things without it, yet we must not conclude that he did act without one, because the scripture speaks of the Father's creating all things by the Son; and when one person is said to do anything by another, it implies that he makes use of him as an instrument. This allegation of the Arians seems to be the only foundation on which their doctrine is built. But there is no necessity of understanding the words which speak of God's creating all things by

z Rom. i. 20.

a Psal. xxxiii. 9.

b Gen. i. 3.



the Son, in the sense in which they interpret them. All effects are produced by the power of God. This power—supposing the Son to be a divine Person, which we have endeavoured, by other arguments, to prove—must belong to him; and the Father and the Son being united in the same Godhead, one cannot act without the other. Hence, whatever is said to be done by the Father, may, in this sense, be said to be done by the Son; for though the Persons are distinct, the power exerted is the same. Thus a learned writer<sup>c</sup> accounts for this matter, when he says: “The Son is of the same nature and substance with the Father; so nearly allied, so closely united, that nothing could be the work of one, without being, at the same time, the work of both. Hence it was, that the Son was Joint-creator with the Father, that all things were made by him, and nothing without him. It was not possible for them either to act, or to exist separately; and therefore it is that the work of creation is, in scripture, attributed to both.” This is a very safe as well as a just way of reasoning, consistent with, and founded on, the doctrine of the Father and Son’s being united in the same Godhead, though distinct Persons, and it is agreeable to the sense of those scriptures which attribute this work to the Son, in the same sense as when it is attributed to the Father.

The Arians, I am aware, will reply, that this does not sufficiently account for that subordination in acting which seems to be implied in the sense of those scriptures in which the Father is said to have created all things by the Son. I shall therefore take leave to notice, more particularly, the texts in which this mode of speaking is used. Though there are several scriptures which represent the Son as a Creator, or consider all things as having been made by him, as well as the Father, or exhibit him as a Joint-creator with the Father; yet there are but two places in the New Testament in which the Father is said to have created all things by the Son,—namely, Eph. iii. 9, in which it is said, ‘God,’ that is, the Father, ‘created all things by Jesus Christ,’ and Heb. i. 2, where it is said, ‘By whom also he made the worlds.’ We have already considered the absurdity of the Socinian way of expounding those other scriptures which speak of Christ as a Creator, in which he is said to act, not in subserviency to, but co-ordinately with, the Father. But as God the Father is, in the scriptures now in question, said to create all things by Jesus Christ, I humbly offer it, as my opinion, that though the other scriptures, in which Christ is set forth as a Creator, have no reference to him as Mediator, or to his work of the new creation, yet such a reference seems to be the probable sense of both these scriptures. As to the former, some suppose that it is needless to give the sense of it; because the words, ‘by Jesus Christ,’ are wanting in some ancient copies, as well as in the vulgar Latin and Syriac versions. But as there are many copies which have the words, we shall suppose the reading to be genuine; and that we may ascertain the sense of it, we may observe that the apostle makes use of the word ‘create’ three times in this epistle. We find it, in chap. ii. 10, and in chap. iv. 24, in both which places it is taken for the new creation, which is brought about by Christ, as Mediator. I humbly conceive, that it may be understood in the same sense, in the verse which we are now considering. The new creation by Jesus Christ is hence a part of that mystery, of which the apostle says in the foregoing words, ‘that was hid in God.’ This sense seems not to be excluded by those who suppose, that, in other respects, it has some reference to the first creation of all things.<sup>d</sup> The other scripture in question is, ‘By whom also he made the worlds,’ *δι’ οὗ καὶ τὰς αἰωνὰς ἐποίησεν*; that is, by whom he made, instituted, or ordained, the various dispensations which the church was under, either before or since his incarnation. This was certainly done by him as Mediator; and in it, as well as in all other works performed by him in his mediatorial character, he acted in subserviency to the Father. I would not be too peremptory in determining this to be the sense of the text; for the apostle speaks, in the following verse, of his ‘upholding all things,’ which is well put after this account of his having created them. I am sensible also that the word which we translate ‘worlds,’ is

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Waterland, *Serm. III.* in defence of the divinity of Christ, page 106.

<sup>d</sup> Vid. Bez. in loc. *Unus Deus, omnes populos condidit, sic etiam nunc omnes ad se vocat; condidit autem per Christum, sic per Christum iustaurat.*

used in Heb. xi. 3, to signify the world that was at first created, in the most proper sense of the word 'creation.' There the apostle says, that, 'through faith, we understand that the worlds,' *τοὺς αἰῶνας*, 'were framed by the word of God,' &c. But yet when I find that in many other places of the New Testament, where the word is used, it is taken in the sense I have stated,<sup>e</sup> I cannot but conclude that the sense most probably belongs to the text. That which most of all determines me to acquiesce in it, is, that the suberviency of the Son to the Father in the mediatorial work is most agreeable to it. If it be objected, that this sense of the text coincides with that which is given of it by Socinus and his followers, which we before-mentioned and opposed, I answer, that it is very foreign to theirs. They endeavour, by their view of the text, to evade the force of the argument brought from it to prove our Saviour's deity; while we only exchange one argument in proof of this for another. It seems to me to be as great an evidence of his being a divine Person, that he is considered as the Author and Founder of the church, in all ages, or the Rock on which it is built, as that he is called, as he is, in many other scriptures, the Creator of the world. If he is the supreme Head, Lord, and Lawgiver of his church, in all ages,—if the faith and hope of all that shall be saved, are founded on him as their great Mediator, Redeemer, and Sovereign, he certainly is God, equal with the Father.

To what was mentioned as the chief prop of our reasoning, namely, that a finite creature cannot be an instrument in supernatural productions, it is objected, that miracles are supernatural productions, and yet have been wrought by men, as instruments in the hand of God; and it is hence inferred that the creation of all things may as well be supposed to have been performed by the Son, as an instrument made use of to this end by the Father. Now, that miracles are supernatural productions, no one denies; and it follows, that they are either a species of creation, or equivalent to it. If it be allowed, therefore, that a creature can have power communicated to him to work them, and therein may be said to be an instrument made use of by God, we cannot reasonably deny that God the Father might use the Son as an instrument in creating all things. But we must take leave to deny that any who are said to have wrought miracles, have had infinite power communicated to them for that purpose. They were not properly instruments in the hand of God, to produce supernatural effects. All that they did, was only to address themselves to God, that he would put forth his immediate power in working the miracle,—to give the people, for whose sake it was to be wrought, occasion to expect it,—and afterwards to improve it for their farther conviction. It is true, miracles are often said to have been wrought by men; but I humbly conceive that nothing more is intended than what I have stated. That this may appear, let it be observed, that sometimes they who wrought them did not make use of any action, but only gave the people ground to expect the divine interposition. Thus, immediately before the earth swallowed up Korah and his company, Moses gave the people to expect the miraculous event: 'And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me. If these men die the common death of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord;'<sup>f</sup> and as soon as he had spoken the words, the ground clave asunder, and swallowed them up. This may be reckoned among the miracles wrought by Moses; though all that he did was only what tended to raise the people's expectation, that the extraordinary event should immediately happen. Again, at other times, when a miracle was wrought, we read of nothing done, but only a word spoken to signify that God would work it. Thus when the captain, with fifty men, was sent by the king of Israel to the prophet Elijah, to command him to come to him, the prophet said, 'If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and

<sup>e</sup> See Matt. xii. 32. 1 Cor. x. 11. Eph. i. 21. and chap. ii. 7. Heb. vi. 5. and chap. ix. 26. The apostle, speaking of 'the foundation of the world,' meaning the first creation, uses the word *κόσμος*; but when, in the following words, he speaks of 'Christ's appearing in the end of the world, to put away sin,' &c. he uses the words *τῶν αἰώνων*.

<sup>f</sup> Numb. xvi. 28—30.



consume thee and thy fifty ;'s and the event immediately happened accordingly. At other times, when miracles were wrought, the person who, in the sense but now mentioned, is said to have wrought them, made use of some external and visible sign. This, if no one was present but himself, was an ordinance for his own faith ; as when the prophet Elisha smote the waters of Jordan with Elijah's mantle, and said, ' Where is the Lord God of Elijah ?' <sup>u</sup> Or when it was a sign given by divine direction, it was an ordinance for the faith of the people present, whose conviction was intended. Yet they were not to suppose that the action used had any tendency to produce the miracle. It was designed only to raise their expectation, that God would work the miracle by his immediate power. Thus when Moses was commanded to lift up his rod, and stretch out his hand over the sea, and divide it, that Israel might pass through, <sup>i</sup> the event intimated immediately took place ; and when he was commanded to ' smite the rock,' <sup>k</sup> God caused water to come out of it. He used also, by divine direction, several other actions, when other miracles were wrought. Hence, though he was said, in a less proper way of speaking, to have wrought them, yet he was no more than a moral instrument in working them ; so that the divine power was not communicated to, or exerted by him. Now, if creatures have been instruments in working miracles in no other sense than this, it cannot be inferred that Christ might be made use of by the Father, as an instrument in creating the world. A moral instrument he could not be ; for there was no doctrine contested, no truth to be confirmed, no subjects present to expect a divine interposition. Indeed, no one ever supposed that the Son of God was an instrument in this sense. Hence, if no one ever was an instrument in any other, nor could be, from the nature of the thing, as has been already proved, the force of the argument which we have laid down is not in the least weakened by the objection we have been considering.

2. Having thus endeavoured to prove the divinity of Christ from the work of creation, we shall proceed to consider how it appears, from those works of providence which are daily performed by him. Providence is as much a divine work, and contains as glorious a display of the divine perfections, as creation ; and it is twofold, namely, preserving and governing. With respect to the former of these, some divines have asserted, that it is, as it were, a continued creation, and not formally so. As creation produces a creature, preserving providence prevents its sinking into nothing. And because the creature is, in all respects, dependent on the power of God, as much so for the continuance of its being, as it was for its being brought into being, preserving providence is an evidence of the divine power of him who sustains all things.

Now that this glory belongs to our Saviour, is plain from scripture. It is said, ' He upholds all things by the word of his power ;' <sup>l</sup> and, ' By him all things consist.' <sup>m</sup> Both these scriptures respect this branch of divine providence, namely, his preserving all things in being ; and they certainly affirm more of him than can be said of any creature. It is not pretended that in this work he acts as the Father's instrument, even by those who suppose that he did so in the creation of all things. Scripture does not speak of God's upholding all things by him, but of Christ's upholding them by his own, that is, the divine power. We have, therefore, as plainly a proof of his deity, from his upholding providence, as there is evidently to be inferred from it the being of a God.

As to the other branch of providence,—the governing of the world in general, or of the church in particular—this also is ascribed to Christ, and affords proof of his Godhead. Whatever degree of limited dominion may be said to belong to creatures, universal dominion belongs to God only. This is assigned as one ground and reason of his right to divine honour. Accordingly it is said, ' Dominion and fear are with him ;' <sup>n</sup> that is, there is a holy reverence due to him, as the supreme Lord and Governor of the world. Again, it is said that ' he shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth ;' <sup>o</sup> and this is considered as the foundation of universal joy, ' O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy,' and of

g 2 Kings i. 12.  
l Heb. i. 3.

h 2 Kings ii. 14.  
m Coloss. i. 17.

i Exod. xiv. 16.  
n Job xxv. 2.

k Chap. xvii. 6.  
o Psal. lxxvii. 4.



praise, 'Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.'<sup>p</sup> Again, it is said, 'The kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations;'<sup>q</sup> and this is assigned as the reason of their worshipping him, 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.'<sup>r</sup> This, therefore, is undoubtedly a branch of the divine glory. Hence, if we can prove that universal dominion belongs to Christ, or that he is the Governor of the world, and of the church on earth, this will plainly evince his deity.

Let us consider him as the Governor of the world. That he sustains this character, seems to be the meaning of several expressions of scripture, in which royal dignity is ascribed to him. He is represented as sitting upon a throne; while his 'throne is for ever and ever,'<sup>s</sup> and he himself is infinitely greater than all the kings of the earth. On this account he is called 'The Prince of the kings of the earth;'<sup>t</sup> and they are commanded to testify their subjection to him, and all are represented as blessed that 'put their trust in him.'<sup>u</sup> His kingdom is considered also, as 'not of this world,'<sup>x</sup> and the honours due to him, such as are divine. These things farther prove his deity. Moreover, his universal dominion, and consequently his Godhead, are evinced by the glorious character of 'the Lord of Hosts,' which we have already considered as belonging to him. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the vision which he had of his glory, says, 'Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.'<sup>y</sup> This character denotes his sovereignty over all the hosts of heaven, and all creatures in this lower world,—his governing them, and making one thing subservient to another, and doing all to set forth his own glory.

His deity will farther appear, if we consider him as the Governor of his church. In this he has access to the souls of men, working in them those graces which are the effects of almighty power. This he does, when they are effectually called; and also in the work of sanctification, which is consequent on their being called, and is carried on till it is perfected. We shall have occasion, under some following Answers,<sup>z</sup> to prove that these are divine and supernatural works; and we shall reserve the more full and particular proof of this to its proper place. At present, we shall only observe that they are spoken of as such in scripture, and ascribed to the exceeding greatness of the power of God,—no less than that 'which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.'<sup>a</sup> Elsewhere they are called 'a new creation,' 'a quickening' or 'resurrection,'<sup>b</sup> 'a breaking of the rock in pieces,' 'taking away the heart of stone,' 'giving a heart of flesh,' or 'a new heart.'<sup>c</sup> These expressions would never have been used, if the work were not divine and supernatural. It follows that, as Christ is the Author of this internal work, he is a divine Person. Now that he is so, is obvious from many places in the New Testament. He is styled 'The Author and Finisher of our faith.'<sup>d</sup> The apostle Paul speaks of 'faith and love abounding, which is in Christ Jesus,'<sup>e</sup> and at the same time, speaks of the grace of our Lord abounding, as the spring and fountain thereof. The apostles desired him to 'increase their faith,'<sup>f</sup> not in an objective way, as affording some greater foundation for it, but subjectively, by an internal work, exciting and promoting the principle of it, which was before implanted in them, and so causing all those graces which accompany it to abound, as the effects of his divine power.

We might farther consider Christ's spiritual government as extended to his church, collectively considered. The church is exposed to many dangers and difficulties, and meets with much opposition from its enemies, who attempt its ruin, but in vain; for it is the object of the divine care, kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, and 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Now this is, in a peculiar manner, the work of Christ. He is the rock on which it is built. His presence, in the midst of his people, is not only their glory, but their safety; and this it would not be, if he were no more than a creature. We might also consider the subserviency of the various dispensations of providence in the world

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 5.<sup>u</sup> Psal. ii. 12.<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 18—20.<sup>d</sup> Heb. xii. 2.<sup>q</sup> Psal. xxii. 28.<sup>x</sup> John xviii. 36.<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17.<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. i. 14.<sup>r</sup> Ver. 27.<sup>y</sup> Isa. vi. 5.<sup>f</sup> Eph. ii. 1.<sup>s</sup> Psal. xlv. 6.<sup>z</sup> See Quest. lxxvii. and lxxxv.<sup>c</sup> Jer. xxiii. 29. Ezk. c. xxxvi. 26<sup>t</sup> Rev. i. 5.<sup>f</sup> Luke xvii. 5.

to their good. He is 'Head over all things to the church ;' and his being so could not cause that subserviency, were he not a divine Person.

We might farther consider how the divine glory of Christ will be demonstrated, in his second coming to complete the work of salvation, begun in this world. To prepare a way for this, there will be an universal resurrection of the dead ; which will be no less an effect of almighty power, than the creation of all things was at first. I need not say anything to prove that this will be a divine work ; but need prove only that the general resurrection will be performed by Christ. This might be proved from several scriptures. In one of these he himself expressly asserts it in words very plain and particular : 'The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth,'<sup>h</sup> &c. Moreover he is represented as coming in the clouds, with power and great glory,—in his 'own glory,' as well as in 'his Father's,' and of the holy angels.<sup>i</sup> The most natural sense of this text seems to be, that his divine glory, which is called 'his own,' and which was comparatively hid from his people while he was on earth, shall eminently be demonstrated in his second coming ; and that his mediatorial glory, which he has received from the Father, as what he had a right to on his having accomplished the work of redemption, shall also be then displayed. Then as to the glory of his retinue, as appearing with all his holy angels, this bears some resemblance to the description by which the majesty of God is set forth on occasion of his appearing on Mount Sinai, to give the law, 'The Lord came with ten thousands of saints.'<sup>k</sup>

We may add, that the work which he shall, immediately after this, be engaged in, namely, that of judging the world in righteousness, plainly proves his deity. None but a divine Person can judge the secrets of all men, and bring to light every thing that has been done from the beginning to the end of time. But this is to be done in the final judgment ; for it is said that 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'<sup>l</sup> This is an extension of that argument, before laid down, to prove his divinity from his omniscience. If his judgment must be, as the apostle says, 'according to truth,'<sup>m</sup> and consequently performed with the greatest impartiality, as well as with an exquisite knowledge or discernment, without which it could not be said that 'the Judge of all the earth does right,'<sup>n</sup>—if rewards shall be proportioned to every work done, so that every one shall receive, as the apostle says, 'according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,'<sup>o</sup>—if persons are to be rewarded, or punished, for all the secret springs of action, which, as well as the actions themselves, must be reckoned either good or bad, according to what they produce,—and if this respects not particular persons only, but all men who have lived, or shall live, from the beginning to the end of the world,—it evidently follows, that He to whom this glorious work is ascribed, must be a divine Person. Moreover, the manner of his appearing with the terror as well as with the majesty of a Judge, being such as shall strike his enemies with the utmost horror and confusion, is a farther proof of his deity. This is represented in a lively manner where it is said that 'the kings of the earth, and the great men,' those who once rendered themselves formidable to their subjects, shall desire to 'hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'<sup>p</sup> And he will not only pronounce the sentence, but execute it ; and he will do this with respect both to his saints and subjects, and to his enemies. As to the former, he will command them to come and possess not only the kingdom prepared for them, but the blessedness which he will confer upon them. This blessedness is called the beatific vision, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ;'<sup>q</sup> and the happiness of heaven is described in such a way as plainly proves our Saviour to be the Fountain of it, and consequently a divine Person. It is represented as a state in which they will 'behold his glory ;'<sup>r</sup> and certainly the beholding of the glory of the most exalted creature, falls infinitely short of this ingredient in the heavenly blessedness.

g Eph. i. 22.

h John v. 28, 29.

i Luke ix. 26.

k Deut. xxxiii. 2.

l Eccl. xii. 14.

m Rom. ii. 2.

n Gen. xviii. 25.

o 2 Cor. v. 10.

p Rev. vi. 15—17.

q 1 John iii. 2.

r John xvii. 24.



On the other hand, the immediate impressions of the wrath of God on the consciences of his enemies, or the power of his anger, which shall render them eternally miserable when banished from his 'presence,' proves him to be a divine Person. The highest degree of misery consists in a separation or departure from him; and this it could not do, if he were not the Fountain of blessedness. Nor could the punishment of sinners be proportioned to their crimes, if it were not to be inflicted by 'the glory of his power.' The apostle joins this and banishment from his presence together;<sup>s</sup> though some understand his words as implying, that their punishment proceeds from Christ's immediate presence, in the display of the greatness of his power, as a sin-revenging Judge. In either sense, it argues him to be a divine Person. And that it is our Saviour who is spoken of, is evident, from the context. It is he who shall appear 'in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel;' and it is he that shall 'come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' We have thus a very plain proof of his deity, from the exercise of his government, either in this or in the other world.

Having endeavoured to prove the divinity of Christ, from his works of creation and providence, and, under the former of these, offered some things in answer to the methods taken by the Socinians, and especially the Arians, in accounting for the sense of those scriptures which speak of the Father's creating all things by the Son; it is necessary for us now to consider the most material objections, brought by the Anti-trinitarians in general, against what has been said in defence of this doctrine, from the works of common and special providence, as ascribed to him, and, in particular, from the administration of his kingdom of grace. It is objected by them that his kingdom, and power of acting in the administration of the affairs relating to it, are wholly derived from the Father. Thus he says, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;'<sup>t</sup> and, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.'<sup>u</sup> Again it is said, 'Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.'<sup>x</sup> As to his managing the affairs of his kingdom, being by the Father's commission and appointment, he speaks of the works which he was to perform as those which 'the Father had given him to finish.'<sup>y</sup> As to his power of executing judgment, which is one of the greatest glories of his kingly government, being derived from the Father, it is said, 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;'<sup>z</sup> and, 'He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained,'<sup>a</sup> meaning our Saviour. When he speaks of his ruling his enemies with a rod of iron, and breaking them to shivers, as the vessels of a potter,<sup>b</sup> he adds, that this 'he received of his Father.' The Anti-trinitarians hence infer that, as he received his dominion, or right to govern the world and the church, from the Father, he cannot be God equal with the Father. As we say, in opposition to their scheme of doctrine, that a derived deity, such as they suppose him to be, cannot be the same with that which the Father has; so they allege this, by way of reprisal, against the argument we have but now insisted on, that a derived dominion cannot be made use of to prove that he who has it is a divine Person, in the sense in which we maintain him to be. Again they say, that in all his works, and particularly in the administration of the affairs of his kingdom, he acts for the Father's glory and not his own; whereas a divine Person cannot act for any other end than for his own glory. This, they allege, disproves, rather than evinces, his proper deity. He says, 'I honour my Father';<sup>c</sup> and, 'I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me.'<sup>d</sup> He also speaks of the Father's giving him a commandment to do what he did: 'I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak';<sup>e</sup> and, 'As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.'<sup>f</sup> Again, he speaks of his having 'kept his Father's commandment,'<sup>g</sup> and, pursuant to this, of his 'abiding in his love.' They hence argue, that he who is obliged to fulfil a

s 2 Thess. i. 9.

t Luke xxii. 29.

u Matt. xi. 27.

x Psal. ii. 6.

y John v. 36.

z John v. 22.

a Acts xvii. 31.

b Rev. ii. 27.

c John viii. 49.

d Chap. v. 30.

e John xii. 49.

f Chap. xiv. 31.

g Chap. xv. 10.



commandment, or who acts in obedience to the Father, is properly a subject or a servant, and therefore cannot be God in the same sense as the Father, who gave this commandment. They add, that in the government of his church, and in that of the world in subserviency to it, he acts in the Father's name, as his deputy and vicegerent. He says, 'The works that I do, in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.'<sup>h</sup> Accordingly his works are called the Father's, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not ;'<sup>i</sup> and these works are said to be done *from* the Father, 'Many good works have I showed you from my Father.'<sup>k</sup> As the consequence of all this, he acknowledges, say they, as he ought to do, that 'the Father is greater than he.'<sup>l</sup> How then, they ask, can he be a divine Person, in the sense in which we assert him to be, when there is a God above him, in whose name he acts in all he does? They farther argue, that, as is expressly stated, he was 'made both Lord and Christ,'<sup>m</sup> and made so by the Father. They argue again, that the donatives of his kingdom, or those honours which are bestowed on his subjects, are not his to give, but the Father's. 'To sit,' says he, 'on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give ; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.'<sup>n</sup> Finally, they remind us that this kingdom which he received from the Father, and thus administers in subserviency to him, is, in the end, to be resigned, or delivered up. 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ;' 'and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.'<sup>o</sup> Accordingly, say they, he shall lay aside those divine honours which he now has, or cease to perform those works which give him a right to claim them. These are the strongest arguments which are brought by the Anti-trinitarians against our Saviour's proper deity. Indeed, as though they had little else to object, there is scarcely an argument against it, but what is supported by this reasoning, which they think to be altogether unanswerable, and which is supported by many more scriptures than those quoted. It is necessary, therefore, that we should consider what may be said in reply.

The sum of what has been objected, as branched into several particulars, is, that since Christ is represented as below the Father, or inferior to him, he cannot be equal with him, for that is no other than a contradiction. To this it may be replied that, though the scripture speaks of our Saviour as receiving a commission from the Father, and as acting in subserviency to him ; yet this does not respect the inferiority of his divine nature, but the subserviency of what is done by him, as Mediator, to the glory of the Father, as this character and office is received from him. Indeed, whenever the Son is represented as engaged in the great work of redemption, or in anything tending to it, or in any work consequent upon it, whereby what was before purchased is said to be applied by him, the reference is peculiarly to him as Mediator. Nothing is more common in scripture, than for him to be represented as Mediator ; especially in all those things which concern the spiritual advantages or salvation of his church,—which is the principal thing to be considered in his government. In this sense we are to understand those scriptures which have been brought to support the objection. It is plain that our Saviour generally speaks of himself under this character ; which is included in his being the Messiah or Christ, and which is the main thing that he designed to evince by his doctrine and his miracles. If, therefore, we duly consider the import of this character, it will not only give light to the understanding of the scriptures referred to, but sufficiently answer the objection against his deity taken from them. Now, our adversaries will not deny that Christ is represented as a Mediator ; but they widely differ from us, when they take occasion to explain what they understand by his being so. Sometimes they seem to mean nothing else by it but a middle being betwixt God and the creature. The work performed by him as such, is not, they say, what requires him to be, in the most proper sense, a divine Person ; and consequently, whatever inferiority to the Father is contained in this character, they conclude to respect his deity. We, on the contrary, distinguish between the subserviency of the work performed by him, as Mediator, to the glory of God the Father, together

<sup>h</sup> John x. 25.  
<sup>n</sup> Matt. xx. 23.

<sup>i</sup> Ver. 37.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 32.

<sup>l</sup> John xiv. 28.

<sup>m</sup> Acts ii. 36.

with the subjection or real inferiority to the Father, of the human nature in which he performed it, and the inferiority of his divine nature. The former we allow; the latter we deny. When we speak of him as Mediator, we always suppose that he is God and man in one person, and that these two natures, though infinitely distinct, are not to be separated. As God, without the consideration of a human nature united to his divine person, he would be too high to sustain the character or to perform the work of a servant, and, as such, to yield that obedience which was incumbent on him as Mediator. On the other hand, to be a mere man is too low for this end; and would be altogether inconsistent with that infinite value and dignity which was to be put on the work he was to perform. It was necessary, therefore, that he should have two distinct natures, a divine and a human, or that he should be God incarnate. This will be more particularly considered under some following answers; and we shall reserve the proof for its proper place, and shall there consider the distinct properties of each nature. All that we shall observe at present is, that the evangelist John, in whose gospel our Saviour, agreeably to his mediatorial character, is often described as inferior to the Father, as well as equal with him, lays down this as a kind of preface to lead us into the knowledge of such descriptions: 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'<sup>a</sup> Now, it follows that several things may be truly spoken concerning or applied to him, which are infinitely opposite to one another, and yet be both true in different respects,—for example, that he has almighty power, as to what concerns his deity; and yet, that he is weak, finite, and dependent, as to what respects his humanity. In one nature, he is God equal with the Father, and so receives nothing from him, is not dependent on him, nor is under any obligation to yield obedience. In this nature, he is the object of worship, as all worship terminates on that deity which is common to all the Persons in the Godhead. But, in the other nature, he worships the Father, and receives all from him, and refers all to his glory. Hence, those scriptures which speak of him as receiving a kingdom, doing all things from or in obedience to the Father, or in his name and for his glory, and as inferior to and dependent on him, are not only applied to him as Mediator, but have a particular respect to his human nature. All, therefore, which can be inferred from those modes of speaking which are quoted as objections against the doctrine which we are defending, is, that he who is God is also man, and, as such, has those things predicated of him which are proper to a nature infinitely below, though inseparably united with, his divine nature.—As to its being said that 'the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son,' or that 'he judgeth the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained,' all that can be inferred is, that, so far as this work is performed by Christ in his human nature, which will be rendered visible to the whole world at the day of judgment, it is an instance of the highest favour and glory conferred upon this nature, or upon God-man Mediator, as man. But so far as, according to descriptions elsewhere given of him, he has a right to judge the world as God, and possesses those infinite perfections whereby he is fit to do it, these are the same which belong to the Father, and therefore not derived from him.—Again, though it is said, 'God hath made him both Lord and Christ,' it is not said that the Father hath made him God, or given him any branch of the divine glory. The words refer to the unction which he received from the Father to be the King, Head, and Lord of his church. This, so far as it is an act of grace, or implies his dependence on the Father, has an immediate respect to him in his human nature; in which, as well as in his divine nature, his dominion as Christ is exercised. On the other hand, his sovereignty and universal dominion over the church and the world, or those divine perfections which render him, in all respects, fit to govern it, belong to the Mediator more especially as God, and are the same as when they are affirmed of the Father. Moreover, when he says, 'I seek not mine own will, but the Father's that sent me,' and elsewhere, 'Not my will, but thine, be done,' his words argue that he had a human will, distinct from his divine, in which he expresses that subjection to the Father which becomes a creature. This is plainly referred to him as man. On the other hand, when he says, speaking of himself co-ordinately with the Father, 'As

p See Quest. xxxvi—xl.

q John i. 14.



the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will,' his words, though spoken of his character as Mediator, have a peculiar reference to his divine nature.—Again, his words, 'The Father is greater than I,' are applied to him as man. On the contrary, when he says, 'I and my Father are one,'<sup>r</sup> he speaks of himself as God, having the same nature with the Father.—Thus, if we suppose our Saviour to be God and man, as he is plainly proved to be from scripture, it follows that whatever is said, as importing his right to divine honour on the one hand, or as to his disclaiming it on the other, is equally true, when we consider him in his different natures. In this manner are we to understand those scriptures which speak of the real inferiority of the Son to the Father. But when, in other places, nothing is intended but the subserviency of what is done by the Son as Mediator, or its tendency to set forth the Father's glory, this may be applicable to those divine works which the Mediator performs. We may thus distinguish between the subserviency of the divine actions to the Father's glory, and the inferiority of one divine Person to another. The former may be asserted, without detracting from his proper deity; while the latter is denied, as inconsistent with it. Thus have we endeavoured to explain those scriptures which are referred to by the Arians, to overthrow our Saviour's divinity; and, by the same method of explanation, I humbly conceive, all others which can be brought for that purpose may be understood. I have passed over that scripture, indeed, which respects Christ's 'delivering up the kingdom to the Father, and being subject to him,' which it might have been expected I should have endeavoured to explain; but I choose rather to reserve the consideration of it to its proper place, when we come to speak of Christ's kingly office, and of his being exalted in its execution.

*Proofs of Christ's Deity from his being the object of worship.*

The next argument to prove the divinity of Christ, is taken from his being the object of religious worship. When, in any act of worship, there is an agreement between our words and actions, we, in both, acknowledge him to be a divine Person, and to have the perfections of the divine nature. This argument is so strong and conclusive, that it is very difficult to evade the force of it. Indeed, it affects the very essentials of religion.

Now, that we may proceed with greater plainness, let us consider, what we are to understand by worship in general, and by religious worship in particular. I am very sensible that the Anti-trinitarians understand the word in a sense very different from what we do. They view it as expressing some degree of humility or reverence to a person whom we acknowledge, in some respect, to be our superior. Whatever words or external signs of reverence we use to express our regard to him who is its object, our worship, as offered to our Saviour, is no more than what they suppose to be due to a person below the Father. Now, that we may not mistake the meaning of the word, let it be considered, that worship is either civil or religious. The former contains in it that honour and respect which is given to superiors, and is sometimes expressed by bowing or falling down before them, or by some other marks of humility which their advanced station in the world requires. This, however, is seldom called worshipping them; and is always distinguished from religious worship, even when the same gestures are used. It is true, there is one scripture, in which the same word is applied to both, 'All the congregation bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king.'<sup>s</sup> But the meaning of this is, they paid civil respect to David, accompanied with those actions which are expressive of humility, and of that honour which was due to him; while their worship, as given to God, was divine or religious. The latter is the only sense in which we understand 'worship' in this argument; and it includes in it adoration and invocation. In the former, we ascribe infinite perfection to God, either directly, or by consequence. An instance of this we have in 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the king-



dom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.' Instances of it occur also in those texts, in which we are said to 'ascribe greatness to him,'<sup>u</sup> to 'glorify him as God,'<sup>v</sup> or 'to give unto him the glory due unto his name.'<sup>x</sup> Invocation is that wherein we glorify God as the fountain of blessedness, when we ask those things from him which none but God can give. This is sometimes called 'seeking the Lord,'<sup>y</sup> or 'calling upon him.'<sup>z</sup> It includes all those duties in which we consider him as a God of infinite perfection, and ourselves as dependent on him, and as desirous to receive all those blessings from him which we stand in need of. Faith, in particular, is, in the various acts of it, a branch of religious worship; for it implies its object to be a divine person. Religious worship includes also supreme love, and universal obedience, and, indeed, the whole of religion; in which we have a due regard to that infinite distance that there is between God and the best of creatures. Religious worship is nowhere understood in a lower sense than this in scripture. As thus described, religious worship is to be given to none but a divine person. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,' said our Saviour, 'and him only shalt thou serve.'<sup>a</sup> This is evident from the idea we have of religion in general; which is a giving of that glory, or an ascribing of those perfections to God, which belong to him as founded in his nature. It is the highest instance of blasphemy and profaneness to ascribe these to any creature; for this is in effect to say that he is equal with God.

Now, it plainly appears from scripture, that Christ is the object of religious worship, and consequently that the argument we are maintaining is just,—namely, that, for this reason, he must be concluded to be a divine person. Many examples occur in scripture of religious worship having been given to him; while they who gave it were not reprov'd or restrained, but rather commended, for performing it. We have some of these in the Old Testament, of which I shall mention two or three: 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.'<sup>b</sup> When Jacob here speaks of Abraham and Isaac having walked before the great Being whom he addresses, his words imply, that, in their whole conversation, they considered themselves as under his all-seeing eye; and Jacob acknowledges him as the God who had sustained, preserved, and provided for him hitherto, the support of his life, and his deliverer, or redeemer, from all evil. This divine person he addresses himself to, in a way of supplication, for a blessing on the posterity of Joseph; and that he intends our Saviour is evident, because he refers to his appearance in the form of an angel, and describes him under that character. We cannot suppose that this holy patriarch is here represented as praying to a created angel; for that would be to charge him with idolatry. Moreover, this is the same description which is elsewhere given of Christ: 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old';<sup>c</sup> and, 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger,' or angel, 'of the covenant, whom ye delight in.'<sup>d</sup> The latter passage contains a very plain prediction of our Saviour's incarnation; whose way is said to be prepared by John the Baptist, who is spoken of in the words immediately foregoing. It is certain, also, that God the Father is never called an angel in scripture; for this name is a peculiar description of the Mediator, who, as such, is never mentioned as the person sending, but as the person sent. Described as an angel, he is considered as one who was to be incarnate, and who, in our nature, was to execute those offices which he was therein obliged to perform. This, then, is the person whom Jacob adored and prayed to.

We have another instance, not only of his being worshipped, but of his demanding this divine honour of him that performed it. When he appeared as 'the Captain of the host of the Lord,' Joshua 'fell on his face to the earth, and did wor-

t Deut. xxxii. 3.

u Rom. i. 21.

x Psal. xxix. 2.

y Psal. cv. 4.

z Psal. l. 15.

a Matt. iv. 10.

b Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.

c Isa. lxiii. 9.

d Mal. iii. 1.

ship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy; and Joshua did so.<sup>e</sup> It cannot be supposed that it was any other than a divine person that appeared. Not only did Joshua fall on his face and worship him, and express his willingness to fulfil his command; but the object of his worship bade him loose his shoe from his foot, for the place on which he stood was holy. This expression is nowhere else used in scripture, except in Exod. iii. 5, in which our Saviour, as we before considered, appeared to Moses, with the majesty and glory of a divine person, and whose immediate presence made the place relatively holy, which the presence of a creature never did. Moreover, the character which he here gives of himself to Joshua, that of 'the Captain of the Lord's host,' not only implies that all Joshua's success was owing to his conduct and blessing on his warlike enterprises; but it also corresponds with the description which is elsewhere given of our Saviour. He is called, 'A leader and commander to the people,'<sup>f</sup> 'The Captain of our salvation,'<sup>g</sup> 'The Prince of life,' and 'The Prince of the kings of the earth.'

There are also in the New Testament various instances of worship given to Christ, which, by several circumstances attending it, was evidently divine or religious. Thus he had divine honour given him, by the wise men from the East, who 'fell down and worshipped him,'<sup>h</sup> &c. And when he ascended up into heaven, 'his disciples worshipped him.'<sup>i</sup> In these instances, there is nothing in the mode of expression which distinguishes the worship given him from that which is due to God. There is a very illustrious instance of his being thus worshipped by a numerous assembly, represented in the vision of John. 'I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever.'<sup>k</sup> In these words there are such glories ascribed, that higher expressions cannot be used by any who adore the divine majesty. And it is plain that our Saviour is intended; for he is described as the Lamb that was slain; and he is also considered co-ordinately with the Father, when it is said that this glory is given to him that 'sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.' Now, if our Saviour be thus worshipped, he must have a right to it; else his worshippers would have been reprov'd, as guilty of idolatry. Peter reprov'd Cornelius, or rather prevents his paying divine adoration to himself, who was no more than a man. 'Stand up,' said he, 'I myself also am a man.'<sup>l</sup> The angel, in Revelation also, when John, through mistake, thought him to be a divine person, and fell at his feet to worship him, expressly forbade him, saying, 'See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.'<sup>m</sup> But our Saviour never forbids any to worship him. We must hence conclude that he is the object of worship, and consequently a divine Person.

1. We shall now proceed to consider the various branches of divine worship that are given to him. And the first we shall mention, is swearing by his name. By this an appeal is made to him, as the Judge of truth, and the Avenger of falsehood. Some think that the apostle intends as much as this, when he says, 'I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not;'<sup>n</sup> as if he had said, 'I appeal to Christ, as the heart-searching God, concerning the truth of what I say.' But there is another sense of swearing,—namely, when, in a solemn manner, we profess subjection to him, as our God and King. This agrees with, or is taken from the custom of subjects, who swear fealty or allegiance to their king. Thus it is said, 'Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.'<sup>o</sup> In doing this, his people acknowledged him to be the object of faith, and to have a right to universal obedience, as well as to be the Fountain of blessedness. This religious worship, as the prophet

e Josh. v. 14, 15.

k Rev. v. 11—13.

f Isa. lv. 4.

l Acts x. 26.

g Heb. ii. 10.

m Rev. xix. 10.

h Matt. ii. 11.

n Rom. ix. 1.

i Luke xxiv. 52.

o Isa. xlv. 23.



foretells, was to be given to the Person of whom he speaks, who is particularly said by the apostle to be our Saviour.<sup>p</sup>

2. Another act of religious worship, which has some affinity to the former, is the baptismal vow; in which, according to the divine command,<sup>q</sup> there is a consecration, or dedication, of the person baptized to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or a public profession that it is our indispensable duty to exercise an entire subjection to them, in a religious manner. This is one of the most solemn acts of worship which can be performed; and there is explicit mention in it of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Here we may consider, in general, that the Son is put co-ordinately with the Father, which no creature ever is. It will also be necessary for us to inquire what is meant by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that so it may farther appear to be an act of religious worship. Some understand nothing by it but our being baptized by the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or by a warrant received from them. But though this is sometimes the meaning of our acting in the name of God; yet more is intended by it in reference to this ordinance, otherwise baptism is not sufficiently distinguished from other acts of religious worship, none of which can be rightly performed without a divine warrant. According to this sense of the phrase, ministers may as well be said to preach the gospel, and the church to attend on their ministration, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for these cannot be done without a divine warrant. Moreover, to suppose that the instituted form of administering baptism, conveys no other idea than that of a divine warrant, is to conclude that there is in it no determinate meaning of the action performed, and that the administrator is to intend nothing else but that he has a warrant from God to baptize. But the administration being made in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, seems plainly to intimate, as the principal thing signified, that they who are baptized are consecrated or devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, devoted to God professedly, and called by his name, in the sense in which the phrase is elsewhere used in scripture. His right to them is hereby signified, and their indispensable obligation to be entirely his; and a peculiar acknowledgment is made of the distinct personal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the concern which each of them has in our salvation. The apostle, speaking of our being baptized in the name of Christ, calls it, 'putting on Christ;' which seems to imply a consecration, or dedication, to him. Persons, as well as things, before this ordinance was instituted, were consecrated to God by divers washings, as well as other rites, used under the ceremonial law; and this consecration seems to be the sense in which the apostle himself explains 'putting on Christ;' for he infers, from this action, that they who had so done *were Christ's*, not only by that right which he has to them as their Creator and Redeemer, but by another which is the immediate result of their professed dedication to him. This, therefore, is such a comprehensive act of worship, that it includes in it the whole of that subjection which is due to the Father, Son, and Spirit; and as the Son, in particular, is considered as the object of it, together with the Father, it follows that he is God, equal with the Father. We may add, that it would be not only an unwarrantable action, but an instance of the greatest profaneness, to be baptized in the name of any one who is not a divine Person. This farther argues that baptism is an act of divine worship. The apostle Paul, remarking that some of the church of Corinth were disposed to pay too great a veneration to those ministers who had been instrumental in their conversion, as though, for this reason, they were to be accounted the lords of their faith, and, in particular, that some said 'they were of Paul,' and being apprehensive that they thought the minister who baptized them had a right to be thus esteemed, not only reproves their ungrounded and pernicious mistake, but takes occasion to thank God, that he had baptized none of them, but Crispus and Gaius, together with the household of Stephanas, lest any should say he had baptized in his own name.<sup>r</sup> Thus, while he testifies his abhorrence of his giving any just occasion to any, to conclude that he was the object of this branch of divine worship, he takes much pleasure in reflecting that the providence of God



had not led them, through the ignorance and superstition which prevailed among them, to draw this false conclusion from his administering baptism, which probably they would not have drawn from any other's having baptized them who had not so great an interest in their affections as he had. This I apprehend to be the meaning of what the apostle says, in the passage referred to.<sup>t</sup> And I take occasion to refer to it, as a farther proof of baptism being an act of religious worship, unalienable from the Father, Son, and Spirit, in whose name alone we are to be baptized. And I cannot but conclude, as a just consequence from its being an act of religious worship, that if the Son were not a divine Person, we might as well be baptized in the name of Paul, or any other of the apostles, as in his name. He would never, therefore, have joined his own name with the Father's, when he gave the commission to baptize, if he had not had a right to it, as well as the Father.

It is objected that, though this ordinance, as it respects the Father, contains, properly, an act of divine worship, in which we consider him as the great Lord of all things, to whom divine worship, in the highest sense, is due; yet we consider the Son, as well as the Holy Ghost, only as having a right to an inferior kind of worship, in proportion to the respective parts which they sustain, by the will of the Father, in the work of our salvation. In particular, to be baptized in the name of Christ, implies, it is said, nothing else but a declaration that we adhere to him, as the Father's Minister, delegated by him to reveal his mind and will to us, and to erect that gospel-dispensation, which we, in this ordinance, professedly submit to. Accordingly, to be baptized in the name of Christ, it is inferred, is to be understood in the same sense as when the Israelites were said to be 'baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.'<sup>u</sup> They signified thereby their consent to be governed by those laws which Moses was appointed by God to give them; on which account, they were denominated a particular church, separated from the world, and obliged to worship God in the way which was prescribed in the ceremonial law. Even so, it is said, we, by baptism, own ourselves Christians, under an obligation to adhere to Christ, as our Leader and Commander, who has revealed to us the gospel; by subjecting ourselves to whom, we are denominated Christians. To this they add, especially the Socinians, that as baptism was first practised as an ordinance, to initiate persons into the Jewish church, and was afterward applied by our Saviour, to signify the initiating of the heathen into the Christian church; so it was designed to be no longer in use, than till Christianity should be generally embraced; and consequently we, being a Christian nation, are not obliged to submit to it, since we are supposed to adhere to the doctrines of Christianity, and it is needless to signify our adherence by this ordinance. It was upon this account that Socinus, and some of his followers, denied the baptism not only of infants, but of all others who were supposed to be Christians.—Now, as to the first part of this objection, that baptism does not signify the same thing when it is administered in the name of Christ, as when administered in the name of the Father,—this is founded on a supposition, that the Son has not a right to the same honour which is due to the Father. But this ought to be proved, and not taken for granted. It altogether sets aside the consideration that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are co-ordinately represented, as the objects of this solemn dedication. This, on the Anti-trinitarian hypothesis, tends very much to derogate from the Father's glory; for God might as well have ordained, that we should have been baptized in his name, together with the name of any of his prophets and apostles who were appointed to be his ministers in revealing his will to us, as in the name of the Son and Spirit, unless they are accounted worthy of having an honour infinitely superior given to them. Again, when it is supposed that our professed subjection to Christ in baptism, is nothing else but our consent to be governed by those laws which he has given us in the gospel, and is compared to that declaration of subjection to the law of Moses which was made in the baptism of the Israelites unto Moses,—this supposes that Christ is only a Lawgiver, that to be a Christian, is nothing else but to be professedly a member of a society which goes under the Christian name,

<sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. i. 12—16.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. x. 2.

and that to 'put on Christ,' is not to consecrate or devote ourselves to him as a divine Person. This is a very low idea of Christianity. The character of a Christian does not imply so much, when assumed by an Anti-trinitarian, as when assumed by those who suppose that they are obliged to honour Christ as they honour the Father, or to submit to his government as truly and properly divine. A Christian, however, is not merely one who is of Christ's party, in the same sense as a Mahomedan, who adheres to the laws of Mahommed, is of his; for Christianity involves an obligation to perform those religious duties of trust, universal obedience, and love, which are due to Christ as a divine Person. As to the supposition, that, baptism being an ordinance of proselytism to the Christian faith, a Christian nation is not obliged to submit to it, this is directly contrary to what our Saviour says, in the words immediately following the institution of the ordinance, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;'<sup>x</sup> that is, 'You may expect my presence with you in administering this ordinance, as well as in preaching the gospel, not only during the first age of the church, till Christianity shall triumph in the world, but as long as there shall be a society of Christians in it.' Even in fact, if Christianity were nothing more than a public declaration of our obligation to adhere to the laws of Christ, it does not follow, that, because we are born in a Christian nation, such a public declaration is no longer necessary. But since, as was formerly observed, more than this is implied in it, namely, our professed subjection to Christ, in a religious way, as a divine Person, the baptismal obligation extends much farther than to our being called Christians, and argues the necessity of our observing this ordinance, as long as Christ is the object of faith, or to be acknowledged as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, and, as such, the object of religious worship,—in other words, to the end of the world.

3. Divine worship is due to Christ, as he is the object of faith. We are to depend upon whatever he has revealed, as a matter of infallible verity; otherwise the faith of the church, especially under the New Testament dispensation, would be built on an uncertain foundation. It will be objected, indeed, that whatever is transmitted to us by divine inspiration, is infallibly true, though the instruments made use of were not divine Persons. When we assert that what Christ delivered was infallible, in a higher sense than this, we rather suppose than prove his deity. The Anti-trinitarians will not deny, that what he imparted was infallibly true, and therefore the object of faith; but they suppose, at the same time, that whatever was imparted to the world by the apostles and prophets, was equally true and infallible. They hence infer that the inspired writers are the objects of faith, in the same sense as our Saviour himself. Now I would not compare what was delivered immediately by our Saviour, with what was transmitted by those who spake and wrote by divine inspiration, or suppose that one was more infallibly true than the other. That which I would principally insist on, when I speak of Christ as the object of faith, whereby he appears to be a divine Person, is that we are obliged, not only to yield an assent to what he has taught us, but also to place a firm reliance on him, or trust in him, for all we expect in order to make us completely happy. In this sense we are to understand the apostle's words, when he says, 'I know whom I have believed,' or trusted, 'and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'<sup>y</sup> This is such a faith, as no creature is the object of. Trust in man is prohibited, and called a departure from God. 'Cursed be the man,' says the prophet, 'that trusteth in man,'<sup>z</sup> or, by a parity of reason in any other creature, 'and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart' herein 'departeth from the Lord.' Trust is such an act of faith as is appropriated to a divine Person. And I cannot but observe that, when Christ is represented as the object of trust, there is something peculiar in the mode of speaking, which is never applied to any creature. His worshippers are said to 'believe in him.' Thus he says, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.'<sup>a</sup> Here he

<sup>x</sup> Matth. xxviii. 20.

<sup>y</sup> 2 Tim. i. 12.

<sup>z</sup> Jer. xvii. 5.

<sup>a</sup> John xiv. 1. Creatures are said to be believed. Our Saviour, speaking concerning John the Baptist, in Mark xi. 31. says, 'Why did ye not believe him?' *διὰ τί οὐκ ἐπίστευετε αὐτῷ;* And, in Acts



commands his people to believe in him in such a way that their faith is accompanied with other graces, and argues him to be a divine Person.

4. Christ is the object of supreme love and universal obedience, which also are acts of religious worship. The former respects him as our chief good and happiness; the latter, as our undoubted Sovereign and Proprietor. We do not say that a person's having a right to be obeyed, or loved, or trusted, in a limited degree, argues him to be a divine Person; but when these graces are to be exercised in the highest degree, without any possibility of our going to excess in them, and when the exercise of them is inseparably connected with salvation, as it is often in scripture said to be, and when our not exercising them is declared to exclude from salvation, I cannot but conclude that they constitute religious worship. And it is certain, that our Saviour is often represented, in scripture, as the object of them.

5. The last thing that we shall consider, under this head, is, that he is the object of prayer and praise. That these are parts of religious worship, needs no proof. Some think, and the conjecture is not altogether improbable, that Christ's being the object of prayer is intended in these words of the psalmist, 'Prayer also shall be made for him continually.'<sup>b</sup> This text might as well be rendered, 'continually made to him,' which agrees with what follows, 'and daily shall he be praised.' That this psalm respects the Messiah, who had a right to more glory than Solomon, appears from several things, which are said in it concerning him. I will not, however, insist on this; as we have more evident proofs in other scriptures. It is also foretold concerning him, that 'to him,' for so the words ought to be rendered, 'shall the Gentiles seek.'<sup>c</sup> This mode of speaking is frequently used, to signify our addressing ourselves to a divine Person with prayer and supplication, for the supply of our wants. But we have yet more evident proofs in the New Testament. The Syrophenician woman's prayer, which was directed to him, was, indeed, short, but very comprehensive: 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David.'<sup>d</sup> Again, 'She came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me.'<sup>e</sup> Her act of religious worship was commended by our Saviour, and her prayer answered. Again, can we suppose any other than an act of religious worship to be contained in the petition of the man who solicited him to cast the devil out of his son, who said, with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief?'<sup>f</sup> We are to understand that he desired that his unbelief should be removed, not in an objective way, by our Saviour's giving him more convincing arguments to confirm his faith, but by a powerful access to his heart, as the Author and Finisher of faith, which is the peculiar gift of God. Accordingly, he is considered as a divine Person, by those who thus address him.

We shall conclude by giving a few instances of short prayers directed to Christ, together with doxologies, or ascriptions of praise, in which he is sometimes joined with the Father and Holy Ghost, and the scope of which proves him to be a divine Person. The apostle Paul thus concludes his epistles: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen;'<sup>g</sup> 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit;'<sup>h</sup> 'The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.'<sup>i</sup> Each is a short and comprehensive prayer directed to Christ, that he would bestow on them all those graces which are necessary to their salvation, and that his grace may so govern and influence their spirits, as to fit them for his service. This supposes him to be the God and Giver of all grace. Again, Paul offers a prayer to the three Persons in the Godhead: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen.'<sup>k</sup> He here desires that they would communicate those blessings which accompany salvation,

viii. 12, the Samaritans believed Philip, πιστιουσιν τῷ Φιλίππῳ; and, in John v. 46. Moses is described as a person who ought to be believed: 'Had ye believed Moses,' &c. says our Saviour, *εἰ γὰρ πιστεύετε Μωσῇ*. But it is never said that a creature is *believed in*. This was Augustin's observation: he says, in Exposit. Evangel. Johan. Tract. 29. "Though we may be said to believe Paul and Peter, yet we are never said to believe *in them*." But as for our Saviour, we are not only to believe him, namely, what he has spoken, but πιστεύειν εἰς αὐτόν, 'to believe in him.'

<sup>b</sup> Psal. lxxii. 15.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. xl. 10.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xv. 22.

<sup>e</sup> Verse 25.

<sup>f</sup> Mark ix. 24.

<sup>g</sup> See 1 Cor. xvi. 23; Phil. iv. 23; 1 Thess. v. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 18.

<sup>h</sup> Philen. 25.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 22.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 14.



by which the divine perfections, and in particular the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are demonstrated; and herein the Son is as much considered the object of prayer as the Father, and consequently is proved to be a divine Person. We may add those doxologies in which praise is given to Christ; and which also exhibit him as the object of divine worship. Thus, Peter, speaking of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, says, 'To him be glory, both now and for ever, Amen;' <sup>1</sup> and Jude says, 'Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever, Amen.'<sup>m</sup> Here it is plain that he ascribes this divine glory to Jesus Christ; for he had spoken of him in the immediately preceding context: 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life,' <sup>n</sup> that is, for that mercy which shall preserve us unto eternal life, and shall then confer that life upon us. This, with a small variation of the phrase, is the sense of those words, 'Keeping us from falling, and presenting us faultless before the presence of his glory.' The very same thing Christ is elsewhere expressly said to do, namely, 'to present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.'<sup>o</sup> He presents it to his own view, as taking a survey of his workmanship, when brought to perfection, just as God is said to have taken a view of all things that he had made at first, when he pronounced them good;<sup>p</sup> and, when he has thus taken a survey of his church, or presented it to himself, he presents it to the view of the whole world of angels and men, causing them, as it is said, exceeding joy. This makes it plainly appear that our Saviour is the Person of whom Jude speaks. And that he is so, is agreeable also to what follows. He is there called, as he is elsewhere, 'God our Saviour';<sup>q</sup> which is a character corresponding with the name by which he was most known, namely, 'Jesus.' Another doxology we have in Rev. i. 4—6, 'Grace be unto you, and peace from Jesus Christ,' &c. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.' There are two places more, in which, to me, it seems more than probable, that doxologies are directed to Christ. The first of these is 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16, 'Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, or can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen.' All allow that nothing greater can be said of God than is here spoken. Hence, the only thing denied by the Arians is, that this is applied to any but the Father. But to me, it seems very obvious that it is spoken of Christ; because he is mentioned immediately before. Thus, in the thirteenth verse, it is said, 'I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession;' <sup>r</sup> that thou keep this commandment without spot, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show; who is the blessed and only Potentate,' &c. Here by 'his times' is meant that season in which his glory shall shine most brightly,—when, what he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, namely, that he was the Son of God, he will demonstrate in the highest degree, and when he will eminently appear to have a right to that glory which the apostle ascribes to him. The other scripture, in which a glorious doxology is addressed to Christ, is 1 Tim. i. 17, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.' A late learned writer,<sup>s</sup> without assigning any reason, puts this among those scriptures which he applies to the Father. The

1 2 Pet. iii. 18.

m Jude 24, 25.

n Verse 21.

o Eph. v. 27.

p Gen. i. 31.

q Tit. ii. 10, 13.

r The words are, *ἐναντίον τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζωνταίου πάντα καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. Here καὶ seems to be exegetical, according to the rule laid down in Note on Tit. ii. 13, to Proof of Christ's Deity from his Titles; and therefore I would render the words, 'God, even Jesus Christ, who quickeneth all things.' And, if this be a just rendering, the Father is not mentioned in the context; and therefore this doxology is not ascribed to him, but to our Saviour.

s See Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, pp. 58, 77.

context, however, seems to direct us to apply it to the Son, who is spoken of in the foregoing verses thus, 'I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;' <sup>t</sup> 'The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,' <sup>u</sup> &c.; 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' <sup>x</sup> 'Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.' <sup>y</sup> Having thus mentioned the great things which Christ did for him, it is natural to suppose that the apostle would take occasion to ascribe glory to him. This accordingly he does in the words immediately following, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal,' &c.

Having considered the argument for Christ's deity taken from divine worship being ascribed to him, we shall proceed to observe the methods used by the Antitrinitarians to evade it. Some of the Socinians, as though there were no scriptures which speak of him as the object of religious worship, have peremptorily denied that it is due to him; and have thought very hardly of their brethren who were of a different opinion, as if they were involved in the common guilt of idolatry, which they suppose his worshippers to have been chargeable with. This occasioned warm debates in Transylvania and Poland, where Socinianism most prevailed towards the close of the sixteenth century. <sup>z</sup> Indeed, the method of reasoning made use of by those who denied that he was the object of worship, though it tended more to his dishonour, yet it carried in it a greater consistency with the Socinian scheme of doctrine, than the opinion of those who, while they viewed him as an object of worship, denied his divinity. As for the Arians, they do not expressly deny him to be the object of worship, but rather deviate from the true sense of the word, when they maintain his right to it. They speak of great honours that are to be ascribed to him, by which one would almost be ready to conclude that they reckoned him a divine Person. But when these honours are compared with those that are due to the Father, we very plainly discover that they mean nothing more by them than what, in consistency with their own scheme, may be rendered to a creature. Thus a late writer, <sup>a</sup> in his explanation of the text, 'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,' <sup>b</sup> plainly discovers his sense of divine worship, as due to our Saviour, to be very remote from that which is defended by those who maintain his proper deity. He says: "The meaning is not that the Son's authority should, like that of the Father, be looked upon as underived, absolute, supreme, and independent; but that as the Jews already believed in God, so they should also believe in Christ; as they already honoured God the Father, so they should also for the future, honour the Son of God,—honour him, as having all judgment committed unto him,—honour him, to the honour of the Father, which sent him,—acknowledge him to be God, to the glory of the Father." This is a very low idea of divine honour; for it is as much as to say, that as the Father is to be honoured as God, so there is a degree of honour which he has conferred on the Son, infinitely below that which is due to himself, but yet called divine, because it is given him by a divine warrant. Whether, in this sense, an angel might not have had a warrant to receive divine honour, I leave any one to judge. Indeed, nothing is contained in this sense, but what tends rather to depreciate than to advance the glory of Christ. But that we may better understand how far the Arians allow that religious worship may be given to our Saviour, as well as that we may take occasion to defend that right to divine worship which we have proved to be due to him, we shall briefly consider, and endeavour to make some reply to several objections.

To what has been stated, that a right to religious worship is founded only in a person's having the perfections of the divine nature, and that our Saviour's having this right is an argument that he is truly and properly God, equal with the Father, it is objected, that if God commands us to worship a creature, we are bound to obey

t 1 Tim. i. 12.

u Verse 14.

x Verse 15.

y Verse 16.

z The chief opposers of Christ's being the object of worship, were Jacobus Paleologus, Franciscus Davidis, Christianus Franken, Simon Budneus. On the other hand, it was defended by Socinus, and several others, though not in the same sense in which we maintain it.

a See Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, page 132.

b John v. 23.



him,—that, without considering any right which is founded in his nature, we are, by divine direction, or in obedience to a command given us for that purpose, to give divine worship to Christ,—and that evidence of such a command having been given, is contained in the text, ‘When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him,’<sup>c</sup> which supposes that they did not worship him before, nor would have done so afterwards, without this divine intimation. Now, as to our yielding obedience to a divine command, provided God should require us to give divine worship to a creature, we do not deny that all the divine commands are to be obeyed. Yet this supposition is groundless; it is, in effect, to suppose what can never be; for God cannot command us to worship a creature, any more than he can discharge us from an obligation to worship himself. We might as well say, that if God should cease to exist, he would cease to be the object of worship; or if a created being had divine perfection, he would have a right to equal honour with God; as to say that it is warrantable for us to pay divine worship to a creature; for each of these is to suppose a thing which is in itself impossible. This will farther appear, from what was formerly said in explanation of the nature of religious worship. Adoration is a saying to a person who is the object of it, ‘Thou hast divine perfections,’ and to say this to a creature, is contrary to truth; and certainly, the God of truth can never give us a warrant to say that which is false. And if we consider worship as an addressing of ourselves to him whom we worship, in such a way as becomes a God, he cannot give us a warrant to render it to a creature; for that would be to divest himself of his glory; it would also disappoint our expectations, by causing us to put our trust in one who cannot save us; and it would place us among those who are justly reprov’d, as ‘having no knowledge, who pray unto a god that cannot save.’<sup>d</sup> We must conclude, therefore, that since God cannot give his glory to another, he cannot, as is supposed in the objection, give any warrant to us to pay divine worship to a creature. As for the scripture referred to, in which God commanded the angels to worship our Saviour when he brought him into the world, it is not to be supposed that he had no right to divine worship before his incarnation. If he be a divine Person, as the scriptures assert him to be, the angels, doubtless, adored him as such before. The only new discovery which was made to them, when he came into the world, was, that the second Person in the Godhead was now God incarnate. This instance of infinite condescension was to be considered as a motive to excite their adoration, but not as the formal reason of it. We are, on the same principle, sometimes commanded to adore and magnify God, for the visible displays of his divine perfections in his works. Thus the psalmist says, ‘O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!’<sup>e</sup> In many other scriptures, also, the works of God are represented as a means or motive to excite our worship or adoration. Yet the divine perfections, which are displayed or rendered visible in them, are the great foundation or reason of worship. We worship God because he is infinitely perfect; though from the visible display of his perfections we take occasion to worship him. In this sense we understand the worship given to Christ by the angels, when brought into the world. They took occasion from this amazing instance of his condescension, to adore those perfections which induced the Son of God to take the human nature into union with his divine;—not that they supposed his right to divine worship was founded in that event.

It is further objected that, as our worshipping Christ includes the ascribing of all that glory to him which is his due, it is enough for us, when we worship him, to confess that he has an excellency above the angels, or that he is the best of all created beings, as well as the most honourable, and the greatest blessing to mankind,—that he was sent of God to instruct us, as a Prophet, in the way of salvation, to intercede for us as a Priest, and to give laws to us as a King,—and that he has done all this faithfully, and with great compassion to us. These things, and whatever else he does for the advantage of mankind, may, it is said, and ought to be, acknowledged to his praise as a debt due to him, and constitute him the object



of worship ; yet we are not to give him that glory which is due to the Father, as though he were a Person truly and properly divine. Now, while it is agreed, that that glory which is due to him, is to be ascribed ; we humbly conceive, that the ascribing to a person of that honour which he has a right to, unless we suppose it to be divine, is not religious worship ; or that to confess that those works which he has done are wonderful, and of great advantage to mankind, unless we suppose them to be such as none but a Person who has the divine nature can perform, is no instance of adoration. Yet all those works which the Arians ascribe to him, may, according to their opinion, be performed by a finite being ; else they must allow the arguments which have been founded on them, to prove his proper deity. Again, if the works which are ascribed to him be considered as properly divine, as they are represented to be in scripture, it must not be concluded that he is to be adored, as performing them ; but we are rather to take occasion from them, as was formerly observed, to adore those divine perfections which are evinced by them, and which render him the object of worship. The works of God are motives to induce us to worship him, and not the formal reason of worship. When, in the first commandment, God lays claim to divine honour, or obliges the Israelites 'to have no other gods before him, because he brought them out of the land of Egypt,' their deliverance, indeed, is to be considered as a motive to worship, but it is the divine power exerted in the deliverance, which was properly the object of worship. So in Psal. cxxxvi. 1, we are commanded to 'give thanks to the Lord, whose mercy endureth for ever ;' and in the following verses, there is a particular mention made of some glorious works which God had done : 'Who alone doth great wonders ; who, in wisdom, made the heavens, and stretched out the earth ; who made the sun to rule by day, and the moon by night,' &c. These and several other works there mentioned, are all considered as motives to excite our adoration ; but his being 'Jehovah, the God of gods, and Lord of lords,' as he is called in the first, second, and third verses, is the great foundation of his right to worship. This character is in itself infinite ; whereas his works are only the effects of infinite power, and so only a demonstration of his right to divine glory. Now, to apply this to those works which are done by our Saviour,—if we suppose them, as we ought, to be properly divine, they are to be considered only as evincing his right to divine honour, or as demonstrating his possession of that true deity which alone constitutes him the object of divine worship.

But some Arians proceed a little farther, when they speak of Christ as the object of worship, and allow that honours, truly divine, may be given to him. Yet this, they say, does not prove him to be God equal with the Father ; for he is herein considered only as the Father's representative, on whom the worship which is offered immediately to him, must be supposed to terminate ; as when an ambassador, who represents the prince that sent him, is considered as sustaining the character of representative, and receives some honour which otherwise he would have no right to, or rather is honoured as personating him whom he represents. Now, whatever may be said to be done by an ambassador, as representing the prince who sent him, there is always something in the manner of his address, or in the honours ascribed to him, which denotes him to be no more than a subject ; and it would be strongly resented, should he assume that honour to himself which is due to his master. Our Saviour, therefore, were he not a divine Person, but only the Father's representative, could not have a right to claim that divine honour which is ascribed to him. Nor have we any foundation in scripture to distinguish between a supreme and a subordinate worship, or a worship given to a person which does not terminate in him, but in another whom he represents. If there be any apparent foundation for this distinction, it must be sought in those expressions in which Christ is represented as Mediator, as acting in the Father's name, and as not seeking his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, or as referring all the honour which is given to him as Mediator to the Father. Now, when our Saviour uses such a mode of speaking, he disclaims any right to divine honour due to him as a man ; in which capacity he received a commission from the Father, and acted in his name. But when the honour of a divine person is given to him as God, though considered as Mediator, he is to be looked upon, not as represent-

ing the Father, or as transferring the divine glory which he receives to the Father, but as having the same right to it as the Father has, inasmuch as he has the same divine nature. We cannot, on any other supposition, account for those modes of speaking, frequent in scripture, in which the glory of a divine person is ascribed to him, without restriction or limitation.

Another objection against the argument for Christ's deity from his being the object of divine worship, is taken from his having refused to have one of the divine perfections ascribed to him, and having directed the person who gave it to ascribe it to the Father. 'He said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.'<sup>f</sup> These words the Anti-trinitarians understand in a sense as if he had said, 'There is but one Person who is good, as goodness is properly a divine attribute; and that is the Father.' They hence infer that he alone is the object of that worship which consists in ascribing to him the perfections of the divine nature; in which sense we have before supposed religious worship to be understood. Now, as to our Saviour's words, 'There is none good but one, that is God,' they are doubtless to be understood in the same sense as all other scriptures which deny a plurality of gods, in opposition to the principles and practice of idolaters. But it does not follow that the Father is the only Person who is God, or the object of divine worship. This has already been considered; so that all I shall reply to this part of the objection is, that the word 'God' is sometimes taken for the Godhead, without a particular restriction or limitation to either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, and may be equally applied to them all. In this sense it is to be taken, when the being of a God is demonstrated by the light of nature; as when, from the effects of the divine power, we argue that there is a God, who is the Creator of all things. But this cannot, if we have no other light to guide us but that of nature, be applied to the Father as a distinct Person in the Godhead; for the distinction between the divine Persons is a matter of pure revelation. Hence all that our Saviour intends by the expression in question is, that no one has a right to have divine perfections ascribed to him, but he who has a divine nature; and whether they be meant of the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, he is denominated, 'The one only living and true God.' It follows, that when such modes of speaking are used in scripture, though the Father be called the one or only God, the Son is not, as a late judicious writer well observes, excluded.<sup>g</sup> As to that part of the objection which concerns our Saviour's blaming the man for calling him good, there are two senses given of it. One is taken from a different reading of the words, namely, 'Why dost thou ask me concerning good?'<sup>h</sup> But it will not

f Matt. xix. 17.

g See Dr. Waterland's defence of the divinity of Christ, Sermon iv. page 127, et seq., where he proves, that the exclusive terms 'one,' 'only,' &c. do not except the Son, so as to deny him to have the same Godhead with the Father. This he proves from several scriptures, namely, Matt. xi. 27, 'No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor any one the Father, save the Son,' from which it does not follow, that the Father does not know himself, nor the Son himself. And when it is said, in 1 Cor. ii. 11, 'The things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God,' the Son is not excluded; for to suppose this would contradict the scripture but now mentioned. On the same principle, the Son only knowing the Father does not exclude the Holy Ghost; for that would be contrary to the scripture last quoted. So in Rev. xix. 12, it is said, that the Son 'had a name written, which no one knew but he himself.' Now no one ever thought that the Father was excluded by this exclusive term. So when God the Father saith, in Isa. xlv. 24, 'I am he that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself,' the words would contradict many other scriptures, which speak of the Son as the Creator of all things, if he were to be excluded by it. Again, when the psalmist saith, concerning the Father, in Psal. lxxxiii. 18, that 'his name alone is Jehovah,' we must set aside all those scriptures in which our Saviour is called Jehovah, if he is excluded by this passage. See more to this purpose in the said Sermon; in which this argument is managed with a great deal of judgment. I shall farther take leave only to cite what is well observed in page 133. "That, perhaps, the word 'God,' in those places, namely, such in which there are these exclusive terms, is to be understood in the indefinite sense, abstracting from the particular consideration of *this* or *that* person, in like manner as the word 'Man' often stands not for any particular human person, but the whole species, or human nature; as when we say, 'Man is frail;' 'Man is mortal;' or the like."

h Τις με ιρωτας περι του αγαθου. Beza speaks of two or three of the most ancient copies in which this reading is found. Grotius also adheres to it, from the credit, as he says, of the most ancient and correct copies. It is also observed, that the vulgar Latin version renders it so; and Augustin read it so in the copy that he made use of. And whereas the evangelists, Mark and Luke,



be much to our purpose either to defend or disprove this reading, since Mark and Luke read it, 'Why callest thou me good?' Passing this over, therefore, and supposing that it ought to be read as we generally do, the common answer which is given to the objection founded on it is, that our Saviour considers the man as ascribing a divine perfection to him whom, at the same time, he concluded to be no more than a creature. Hence his words are as if he had said, 'Either first acknowledge me to be a divine Person, or else do not ascribe divine honours to me; for then, by consequence, thou mightest as well ascribe them to any other creature.' By the same method of reasoning, had he conversed with any Anti-trinitarian, in his day, who had given divine worship to him, and yet denied his proper deity, he would have reproved him for his mistake, arising from an erroneous conscience, as much as he does the man, whom he reproves, in the same sense, for styling him 'good.' That Christ does not exclude himself from having a right to this divine perfection, is evident from those several scriptures, formerly referred to, which ascribe perfections to him that are equally divine; for he who has a right to one divine perfection, has a right to all. Besides, he styles himself, 'The good Shepherd,'<sup>i</sup>—a title which certainly imports as much as the expression, 'good Master,' used by the man referred to. And that his being the good Shepherd argues him to be the Fountain of blessedness, which is certainly a divine perfection, is evident; because he speaks of himself as communicatively good in the highest sense: 'I give unto them,' namely, my sheep, 'eternal life.'<sup>k</sup>

### *The Divinity of the Holy Spirit.*

Having proved the deity of the Son, we proceed to consider that of the Holy Ghost. Here we are obliged to oppose the Socinians and the Arians, though in different respects. The Socinians seem to be divided in their sentiments on this subject. Some of them consider the Holy Ghost no otherwise than as a divine power; and they call him *Virtus Dei*, or the divine energy, or power of acting, and seem to deny his distinct personality, as the Sabellians do that of the Son and Spirit. Others of them, convinced that there is sufficient proof of his personality in scripture, deny his deity, supposing him to be no other than a created ministering Spirit.<sup>l</sup> As for the Arians, the council at Nice was so much employed in defending the deity of our Saviour, by proving him to have the same essence with the Father, that the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost did not come to be discussed. This doctrine, however, is universally denied by those who adhere to the Arian scheme. It is true that, as they do not question his personality, so they allow that he has many glories ascribed to him, and agree in words with the scripture account of his character; but they are, notwithstanding, far from asserting his proper deity, any more than that of the Son.

We have already proved him to be a distinct Person.<sup>m</sup> Nothing, therefore, remains, but that we consider him as having a divine nature. In discussing this subject, we shall draw our arguments from the same sources as when we proved the divinity of the Son, namely, from those divine names, attributes, works, and worship, which are ascribed to him. We have no occasion, however, to insist on the proof of the proposition, that he who is thus described is God; for we have done that already under each class of arguments in defence of our Saviour's deity. We need only consider the arguments as applied to the Holy Ghost. And,

read it, 'Why callest thou me good?' he endeavours to reconcile this different reading therewith, supposing there was a seeming contradiction between them. This he might better have done, by referring to some copies which had it, as we read it, 'Why callest thou me good?' and as he has not done so, it is probable he saw none which so rendered it in his time. Vid. Augustin. de Consensu Evang. lib. ii. cap. 63. It is thus translated also in the ancient Hebrew version of the gospel of Matthew.

i John x. 14.

k Ver. 28.

l In this they agree with those who were formerly called Macedonians, from Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, who lived about the middle of the fourth century, and who entertained such sentiments of the Holy Ghost, and had a considerable party that adhered to him, who were also called Pneumatomachi.

m See pages 153, 154.



I. It appears that he is God, equal with the Father and Son, from the same divine names being given to him which are given to them.

1. He is called 'God,' without any thing tending to detract or diminish from the proper sense of the word; or he is called so in the same manner as when the name is applied to the Father or the Son. Thus, 'Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.'<sup>o</sup> Here he is not only called 'God,' but put in opposition to the creature. The words are as if the apostle had said, 'Thou hast endeavoured to deceive him by whom I am inspired, which is a greater crime than if thou hadst lied to me only.' It is objected, however, that it is not the Holy Ghost who is here called 'God,' but the Father. In defence of this sense of the text, it is supposed that, though the lie was immediately designed to deceive the apostles, or the Holy Ghost, by whom they were known to be inspired, yet it was interpreted by God the Father, as an attempt to impose upon him through the medium of his ministers; for, in the character of ministers, the objectors regard not only the apostles, but also the Holy Spirit. Accordingly they thus argue: He who does any thing against God's ministers, to wit, the Father's, may be said to do the same against him. Here they refer to some scriptures which, they think, give countenance to their argument,—namely, *Exod. xvi. 8*, where Moses tells the Israelites, when they murmured against him, 'Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord;' *1 Sam. viii. 7*, where God says to Samuel, speaking concerning the Israelites, 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me;' the words of our Saviour to his disciples, 'He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me;'<sup>p</sup> *1 Thess. iv. 8*, 'He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.'<sup>q</sup> Now, how plausible soever this objection may seem to be, yet, if duly considered, it will not appear sufficient to overthrow the argument we are maintaining. It is true, indeed, that what is done against any one who acts by a commission, as a servant to another, is interpreted as done against him who gives him the commission. He, for example, who affronts a judge, or an ambassador, affronts the king whom he represents; or if an inferior servant is ill treated, in delivering a message from his master, there is always supposed to be a reflection on him who sent him. But I humbly conceive, this cannot be applied, as it is in the objection, to Ananias, 'not lying unto men, but unto God.' To make this appear, let it be considered, that here are two terms of distinction; and these respect either God the Father and the apostles, or God the Father and the Holy Ghost, or God the Holy Ghost and the apostles. Now God the Father cannot be said here to be distinguished from the apostles, so as to give countenance to this phrase, 'Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God;' because it is said, in the foregoing verse, that 'they had lied to the Holy Ghost.' If the Holy Ghost had not been mentioned, indeed, there might have been more ground to conclude, that Peter distinguished himself from God the Father, or intimated that Ananias, in attempting to deceive him, attempted to deceive God who sent him. But even then the passage would not have fully corresponded with the sense of those scriptures which are quoted by the objectors as of a similar character. For though he who despises a servant, despises him who sent him, and he who despises a minister, when he is preaching the gospel, or despises the message which he brings, may be said to despise God, whose message it is; yet it does not follow that, if a person design to impose, in other respects, upon a minister, he imposes upon God who sent him. He may not disown the divine authority, or commission, which the minister has to preach the gospel, and yet may conclude that he can deceive him,—though he is sensible that he cannot deceive God, who knoweth all things. Again, let us consider whether God the Father be here distinguished from the Holy Ghost. To suppose this would make the passage say, 'Thou hast lied to the Holy Ghost, wherein thou hast not lied to man, but to God, namely, the

<sup>o</sup> Acts v. 3, 4.      <sup>p</sup> Luke x. 16.      <sup>q</sup> See Woltzogen, and other Socinian writers, in loc. and Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, page 13, where he inserts this among those scriptures; in all which he supposes that the word 'God' is applied to the Father.

Father.' Now, had the apostle designed to distinguish the Holy Ghost from the Father, and by doing so to deny his deity, he ought to have expressed himself thus: 'Thou hast not lied unto the Holy Ghost, but unto God.' This would effectually have determined him not to have been God, and removed any suspicion that by the expression, 'Thou hast not lied unto men,' we were to understand the apostles. Or if it be objected, that to have said this would have been contrary to fact, since Ananias lied both to the apostles and to the Holy Ghost, the words might have been, 'Thou hast not lied to the Holy Ghost, or to men, that is, not to them only; but thou hast, interpretatively, in lying to them, lied unto God, namely the Father.' Had Peter expressed himself thus, the sense would have been plain and obvious, in favour of the Anti-trinitarians, as well as agreeable to their interpretation of the texts quoted in their objection. But as the words are not so, we must conclude that in this text there is no other distinction than between God the Holy Ghost and the apostles. Accordingly, the sense is very plain and natural; and is as if the apostle had said, 'Thou hast endeavoured to deceive me, who am under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is a greater crime than if thou hadst only lied to me, at a time when this honour was not conferred upon me; for thou hast committed a double crime,—thou hast not only lied to me, which thou oughtest not to have done, but thou hast lied to the Holy Ghost, and, in so doing, hast not lied unto men, but unto God.' Hence, it is said, that, Ananias and his wife had agreed together to tempt the Holy Ghost.<sup>r</sup> What is called 'a lying to him,' in one verse, is styled 'a tempting him' in another. This, then, seems to be a plain and easy sense of the words, which any unprejudiced reader would be inclined to accede to. And as scripture is written to instruct the most injudicious Christians, as well as others, I cannot conceive that modes of speaking would be used in it, especially in a matter of so great importance as this, which have a tendency to lead persons out of the way, by deviating from the common sense of words, and which, in this case, might induce some, by adhering to the most proper sense, to acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be God, if he were not so.

In another scripture the Holy Ghost is called, 'The God and the Rock of Israel.'<sup>s</sup> Now, by comparing the passage with the foregoing and following words, it seems very evident that it is applied to him. It is said in the context, 'The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.' Then we have an account of what he said: 'He that ruleth over man must be just,' &c. It cannot, with any colour of reason, be supposed that there is more than one Person here intended, who spake to the prophet. And as this Person is called not only 'the God,' but also 'the Rock of Israel,' he is plainly intimated to be the almighty God of Israel; for that, in other scriptures, is the sense of the metaphor, 'a rock,' when applied to God.

Again, it is said, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?'<sup>t</sup> Here it must be observed, that their being called the temple of God, who is said to dwell in them, denotes the inhabitant to be a divine Person; for a temple, according to the known acceptation of the word, always implies a deity, and so is called the house of God. Now, he who dwelt in them, and on account of whose dwelling in them they are called his temple, is expressly said to be the Spirit of God; and the passage corresponds with what is said concerning him elsewhere, 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which,' or who, 'is in you?'<sup>u</sup>

2. In further proof of the Holy Spirit's deity, we observe that he is called, 'Lord.' This seems very evident from Isa. vi. 8, 9, 'And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not,' &c. Here the person sending speaks both in the singular number and the plural, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' By the former expression, 'Whom shall I send?' he evinces his divinity, as having a right to give a commission to the prophets, to declare his mind and will to man; and this right, as will be observed in a following section, none but a divine Person possesses. By the latter, 'Who shall go for us?' he includes himself among the Persons in the God-



head; for, as has before been observed, when God is represented as speaking in the plural number, a Trinity of Persons seems to be intended. But that which we principally consider is, that the Holy Ghost is here called 'Lord.' This appears from what the apostle says in Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 'Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand,' &c. It cannot be reasonably objected, that the apostle refers only to the book of Isaiah, and not to this particular part of it. For though the words, 'Thus saith the Holy Ghost,' might be used as a preface to any quotation from scripture, as all scripture is given by his inspiration, yet the message referred to by the apostle was not only transmitted by Esaias to the church, but is distinguished from all the other things which the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that the apostle, when referring to this scripture, and saying, 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by him,' means anything else than the Holy Ghost's giving him this commission. He, consequently, who gave this commission, or spake thus to him, is the Holy Ghost; who is, in the foregoing words, called 'the Lord.'

In another scripture it is said, 'We are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;' or, according to the margin, 'As by the Lord the Spirit.'<sup>x</sup> This reading is certainly as proper as any other, and is, by some, preferred to all others. The passage contains, therefore, at least a probable argument that the Spirit is expressly called 'Lord.'<sup>y</sup>

II. The Holy Ghost appears to be God, from those divine attributes that are ascribed to him.

1. He is eternal. In Heb. ix. 14. it is said, 'Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself, without spot, to God.' I am sensible that, according to the opinion of many the phrase 'eternal Spirit' here signifies Christ's eternal Godhead, which is so called on account of the spirituality of its nature; and that it is designed to set forth the infinite value which the oblation he made of himself, in his human nature, to God, received from the divine nature, to which it was united. Now though this is a very great truth, yet there does not seem to be so great a propriety in the expression, when 'the eternal Spirit' is taken for the divine nature, as when understood of the Holy Ghost. Christ may be said to have, by him, offered himself, without spot, to God, as implying, that the unction which he received from the Holy Ghost, was the means to preserve him from all sinful defilement,—on which account his oblation was without blemish. Indeed it was no less necessary, in order to his oblation being accepted, that it should be spotless, than that it should be of infinite value. I must conclude, therefore, that it is the Holy Ghost who is here called 'the eternal Spirit.' [See Note 2 T, p. 253.]

Moreover, his eternity may be evinced from his having created all things; for he who made the world and all finite things, wherewith time began, must have been before them, and consequently from everlasting. By this, the eternity of Christ was proved, under a foregoing Head; and that the Holy Ghost made all things, will be proved under our next argument.

2. His immensity, or omnipresence, is a further proof of his deity. This attribute seems to be plainly affirmed of him in Psal. cxxxix. 7, 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?' The import of these words is, there is no place where the Spirit is not. It is allowed by all, that they describe the divine immensity in a very elegant manner. It is objected, indeed, that one part of this verse is exegetical of the other; and that the psalmist, by 'the Spirit,' intends nothing else but the presence of God. But it is equally probable, if not more so, that the Spirit is distinguished from the presence of God, and consequently that he is a distinct Person in the Godhead. This interpretation does not make any strain upon the sense of the words; for the Spirit, as has been before observed,<sup>z</sup> is often spoken of in scripture as a Person. It is not strange,

<sup>x</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.

<sup>y</sup> Several of the Post-Nicene Fathers have taken the words, *καταρτίσας αὐτὸν Κυρίῳ Πνεύματι*, in the sense, 'As by the Lord, the Spirit;' and, in particular, Basil. de Spirit. Sanct. ad Amphiloch. cap. 21 and Chrysost. in loc.

<sup>z</sup> See Section on the Personality of the Holy Spirit.



therefore, that he should be mentioned as such in this text; and, if he be spoken of as a Person, it is beyond dispute that he is here proved to be a divine Person.

3. His deity farther appears from his omniscience. This perfection is ascribed to him in 1 Cor. ii. 10, 'The Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God.' To search, indeed, is a word used in condescension to our common mode of speaking. We arrive at the knowledge of things by searching, or inquiry. But this idea is to be abstracted from the word, when applied to God. For him to search is to know all things. In this sense, the word is used in Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24, 'Search me, O God,' and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,' &c. The word implies, not the manner of his knowing, but the exquisiteness of his knowledge. In this sense we must understand it in the text in question; for while the Spirit is said to search all things, we have an account of the objects of his knowledge, namely, 'the deep things of God.' Thus he knows all those things which were hid in the divine mind from all eternity, and the infinite perfections of the divine nature, which are incomprehensible to a creature, and which none can, 'by searching, find out to perfection.'<sup>a</sup> In this respect, the highest creatures, the angels, are said to be 'charged with folly;'<sup>b</sup> for their knowledge is comparatively imperfect. Besides, the manner of the Spirit's knowing all things is not like ours, that is, by inferring consequences from premises, in a way of reasoning; for it is said, in the verse immediately following, that 'he knows the things of God,' in the way in which a 'man knoweth the things of a man;' that is, he knows his own thoughts, by an internal principle of knowledge, not by revelation, or by any external discovery. Thus the Spirit knows the divine nature, as having it. His omniscience, therefore, is a plain proof of his deity.

III. The deity of the Holy Ghost may be farther evinced, from his performing those works which are proper to God only.

1. He created all things. In Gen. i. 2. it is said, 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' Here, by 'the Spirit of God,' cannot be meant, as some suppose, the air or the wind; for that was not created till the second day, when God made the firmament. Again, it is said, 'By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens;'<sup>c</sup> and, 'The Spirit of God hath made me.'<sup>d</sup> Some of the Arians are so sensible that the Spirit, as well as the Son, is represented as the Creator of all things, that they suppose him to have been an instrument to the Son in the work of creation. This, according to the Arian scheme, is as much as to say, he is an instrument of an instrument. Indeed, to say the Son created all things, as an instrument, has been proved to be an indefensible notion;<sup>e</sup> but to say that the Spirit is his instrument is much more so.

2. Extraordinary or miraculous works, which are equivalent to creation, have been performed by the Spirit. The apostle, speaking concerning extraordinary gifts, which were subservient to the propagation of the gospel in the first preaching of it, attributes them to the Spirit. This he largely insists on, in 1 Cor. xii.; and in particular, he says, 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.'<sup>f</sup> Many who defend the doctrine of the Trinity, take for granted, that this passage speaks of all the Persons in the Godhead,—that it calls our Saviour 'Lord,' and the Father 'God.' Some of the Anti-trinitarians, hence, argue, that the Spirit is not God, because he is distinguished from the Father, whom they suppose to be called God. I cannot but conclude, however, that the Holy Spirit is set forth under all the three names. The works attributed to him, notwithstanding the variety of expressions, are the same, and are included in the general term 'spiritual gifts.' I hence take the meaning of the text to be this, There are diversities of gifts, or extraordinary operations, which some are enabled to put forth in the exercise of their ministry, and which are all from the same Spirit, who is Lord and God, who has an infinite sovereignty, and bestows these blessings as he pleases, as becomes a divine

a Job xi. 7.

d Chap. xxxiii. 4.

b Chap. iv. 18.

e See Section on the Divinity of Christ.

c Job xxvi. 13.

f 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.

person. This interpretation agrees very well with what is said, in the eleventh verse, 'All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.'

3. The Spirit of God commissioned and qualified ministers to preach the gospel, and thereby to gather and build up churches, determining that their ministry should be exercised in one place, and not in another. This work is a peculiar branch of the divine glory; and no one has a right to do it, but a divine Person. A creature may as well pretend to command the sun to shine, or to stop its course in the heavens at his pleasure, as to commission a minister to preach the gospel, or to restrain the preaching of it. But the Holy Ghost is plainly said to have called and appointed the apostles to exercise their ministry in the first preaching of the gospel, after he had, by conferring extraordinary gifts upon them, qualified them for it. Accordingly, in Acts xiii. 2, he speaks in a style truly divine, 'The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.' In Acts xx. 28, also, the apostle tells the elders or ministers of the church at Ephesus, that 'the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.' We read, likewise, of the Spirit's determining where they should exercise their ministry. Thus he commanded Philip to go and preach the gospel to the eunuch: 'Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.'<sup>g</sup> At another time, the Spirit bade Peter, when he doubted whether it were lawful for him to do it or not, go and preach the gospel to Cornelius: 'The Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee; arise therefore and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them.'<sup>h</sup> At another time, it is said, 'They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia; and they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.'<sup>i</sup> Again, it is said, that the apostle Paul was ordered, in a vision, to go to Macedonia, and that he obeyed, 'assuredly gathering that the Lord,' that is, the Spirit, 'had called him to preach the gospel unto them.'<sup>k</sup> Nothing can be a greater proof than what these instances furnish of the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost. They relate to a work of the highest importance, and one which evidently proves his divinity.

4. His divinity farther appears from the unction which he conferred on our Saviour, to perform the work of a Mediator in his human nature. In Isa. lxi. 1. it is said, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek,' &c.; and these words are particularly referred to, in Luke iv. 18, 19, as signifying our Saviour's unction by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, it is not denied, even by those who do not infer his deity from them, that they are spoken of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly it is inserted, by a late writer, among those scriptures which speak particularly of the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup> It would be a great strain on the sense of the text, to suppose that the clause, 'he hath anointed me,' refers to the Father, and not to the Spirit. As to the meaning of the word 'unction,' it is borrowed from the ceremonial law, under which the prophets, priests, and kings, were publicly anointed with oil, to signify the warrant or commission they had received from God, to execute their offices, together with the qualifications which were to be expected for the discharge of them. In this sense our Saviour is said to have been anointed by the Holy Ghost. He was anointed in his human nature, in which he was obliged to yield obedience and subjection to God; and he was authorised and qualified to perform this obedience by the Holy Ghost. However difficult to be performed, it was, in consequence of the Spirit's unction, discharged by him, without the least failure or defect; and owing to the same thing, as we observed before, his oblation was without spot. The work was certainly extraordinary, and consequently the glory redounding from it, to the Holy Ghost, is such as proves him to be a divine person.

5. A farther proof of his divinity is that the work of grace, both as to the beginning, progress, and completing of it, in the souls of believers, is ascribed to him, as well as to the Father and the Son. That this is a work of God's almighty power, and consequently too great to be performed by any creature, and that the Holy Ghost, in particular, is the Author of it, we shall here take for granted,

<sup>g</sup> Acts viii. 29.

<sup>h</sup> Acts x. 19, 20.

<sup>i</sup> Acts xvi. 6, 7.

<sup>k</sup> Ver 9, 10.

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, p. 198.



without attempting to offer proof. This indeed is not in itself a just method of reasoning; but we shall be led to insist on the subject, under some following Answers, and shall there prove the point in question.<sup>m</sup> And if the work whereby we are regenerated and sanctified, and enabled to overcome all opposition till we are brought to glory, appear to be the effect of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, then he who is the Author of it is evidently the God of all grace.

IV. The Holy Ghost appears to be God, inasmuch as he has a right to divine worship. That none but a divine Person has this right, has been already proved. That the Spirit has a right to it, might be evinced, from his having those divine perfections which, as has been before observed, are ascribed to him in scripture. As he has the perfections of the divine nature, which are the objects of adoration, it follows that he is to be adored. If, likewise, he has performed those works which argue him to be the Proprietor of all things, the same consequence follows. And if all that grace which is necessary to make us meet for the heavenly blessedness, be his work and gift, it follows that he is to be supplicated for it; and to do this is a great branch of religious worship. But this being only an improvement of, or a deduction from arguments already laid down to prove his deity, we shall inquire whether we have not the obligation of a command, or some examples equivalent to this, which will farther warrant our giving divine worship to him.

Some suppose, that the prayer is directed to the Holy Ghost, which is mentioned in Acts i. 24, 25, 'Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship.' The designation of persons to the exercise of their ministry, as well as the extraordinary gifts with which they were furnished, is peculiarly ascribed, in the book of Acts, to the Holy Ghost. It is supposed, therefore, that the disciples prayed to the Holy Ghost, that he would signify whom of the two nominated by them he had chosen to the apostleship, in the room of Judas. But this being, at most, but a probable argument, I shall lay no stress upon it.

I humbly conceive, however, that we have a more evident example of prayer to the Holy Ghost, in 2 Thess. iii. 5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' It seems more than probable that the Holy Ghost, who is here called Lord, is prayed to; for he is distinguished from the Father and Son, and the apostle prays to him that he would direct them into the love of the Father, and enable them, patiently, to wait for the Son.

There is another instance in 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13, 'The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, to the end that he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here the Holy Ghost seems to be the Person prayed to; for he is plainly distinguished from the Father and Son, inasmuch as what is prayed to him for, is that the believers may be holy before the Father, at the coming of the Son.

There is another scripture, in which it is still more evident, that the apostle prays to the Holy Ghost together with the Father and Son, namely, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen.' In that part of this prayer which respects the Holy Ghost, is an humble supplication, that he would be pleased to manifest himself to them, or that he would communicate to them those graces which they stood in need of. As the church is elsewhere said to have 'fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,'<sup>n</sup> so here the apostle prays that they may have fellowship with the Holy Ghost. And how could he have prayed for this blessing unless he be supposed to have addressed himself to the Holy Ghost? Whenever any thing is desired, or prayed for, which can be considered no otherwise than as an effect produced by a free agent, the prayer or desire for it, is supposed more immediately to be directed to the agent. Should a person say, in presence of a disobliged friend, 'O that he would look upon me, that he would converse with me, or that he would discover his wonted love unto me!' though, according to the form of expression, it seems not to be directed to him, yet every

<sup>m</sup> See Quest. lix. lxvii. lxxii. lxxv.

<sup>n</sup> 1 John i. 3.



one would suppose it to be equivalent to an immediate address made to him. Hence, for the apostle to desire that the Holy Ghost would have communion with believers, that is, converse with, and manifest himself to them, in performing all those works which were necessary for their edification and salvation, cannot amount to less than a prayer to him.

We shall now proceed to consider some objections, brought by the Anti-trinitarians, against the deity of the Holy Ghost. A divine person, they say, cannot be the gift of God, for that supposes him to be at his disposal, and inferior to him. But the Spirit is said to be given by him: 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them;' <sup>o</sup> 'God gave them the like gift,' <sup>p</sup> meaning the Spirit, 'as he did unto us;' 'Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' <sup>q</sup> Again, the Spirit is said to be *sent*, and that either by the Father, or by the Son, 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name;' <sup>r</sup> 'If I depart, I will send him unto you.' <sup>s</sup> Again, he is said to receive from another what he communicates, 'He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.' <sup>t</sup> But this, it is alleged, is inconsistent with the character of a divine Person, who is never said to receive what he imparts to others. Hence, the apostle says, concerning God, 'Who hath first given to him?' <sup>u</sup> Again, the Holy Ghost is said to speak not of himself, but what he hears, when he shows things to come. <sup>x</sup> It is hence inferred, that he did not know that which he was to communicate before he heard it. Again, it is alleged, that he is said to have a mind distinct from God, unless we suppose that there are a plurality of gods, and so more distinct divine minds than one. In support of this, the text is quoted, 'He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.' <sup>y</sup> Again, he is represented as making intercession, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us,' <sup>z</sup> &c. This, it is alleged, is an act of worship; so that he himself cannot be the object of worship, or possess those blessings for which he intercedes. Again, he is not only said to be resisted and grieved, expressions which, in an improper sense, or speaking after the manner of men, are sometimes applied to God, but he is said to be quenched, or extinguished. <sup>a</sup> This, together with other things said concerning him, is alleged to be not applicable to a divine Person.

These are the most material objections which are brought against the doctrine which we have been endeavouring to maintain. The sum of them all is this,—that it is inconsistent with the character of a divine Person to be dependent on, and subjected to the will of another, as the Spirit is supposed by the objectors to be. That we may defend the Godhead of the Holy Ghost against them, we shall premise something respecting all those scriptures which speak of the Spirit, as given or sent by the Father, and then apply it to the sense of those in particular which are brought to support the objections.

It may be easily observed, that in several places of scripture, especially in the New Testament, 'the Holy Ghost' is often taken for the gifts or graces of the Spirit, and more particularly for that extraordinary dispensation, in which the apostles were endowed with those spiritual gifts which were necessary for the propagation and success of the gospel. These, by a metonymy, are called 'the Spirit.' I humbly conceive, that all those scriptures which speak of the Spirit's being 'poured forth,' <sup>b</sup> are to be understood in this sense. On the occasion when 'the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,' it is said, that 'upon the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.' <sup>c</sup> Thus we are to understand that scripture, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost;' <sup>d</sup> and this, 'The Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' <sup>e</sup> In the latter passage, the word 'given' is supplied by our translators, probably to fence against a weak argument of some Anti-trinitarians, taken from that text, to overthrow the eternity of the Spirit. But whether the word be supplied or not, the sense of the text is plainly this,—that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were not con-

<sup>o</sup> Neh. ix. 20.

<sup>t</sup> John xvi. 14.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Thess. v. 19

<sup>c</sup> Acts x. 44, 45.

<sup>p</sup> Acts xi. 17.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. xi. 35.

<sup>b</sup> As in Prov. i. 23. and Joel ii. 28. compared with Acts ii. 17. and elsewhere.

<sup>d</sup> Acts xix: 2.

<sup>q</sup> Luke xi. 13.

<sup>x</sup> John xvi. 13.

<sup>e</sup> John vii. 39.

<sup>r</sup> John xiv. 26.

<sup>y</sup> Rom. viii. 27.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. xvi. 7.

<sup>z</sup> Ver. 26.

ferred before Christ's ascension into heaven. The passage is thus a farther confirmation that the name 'Holy Ghost' is sometimes used to denote the Spirit's gifts. Again, all those scriptures which seem to represent the Holy Ghost as inferior to the Father and Son, some of which are noticed in the objection, may be understood as denoting the subserviency of the works of the Spirit, which also are called 'the Holy Ghost,' to those works which are said to be performed by the Father and Son. Now it is certain, that the subserviency of one work to another, performed by different persons, does not necessarily infer the inferiority of one person to the other. We must, accordingly, distinguish between the Spirit, as subsisting, and as acting. In the former sense, he is a divine Person, equal with the Father and Son; in the latter, he may be said to be subservient to them.

But now we shall proceed, in consistency with what has been premised, to consider the sense of those scriptures which are brought to support the objection. The first is that in which it is said, 'Thou gavest them thy good Spirit to instruct them.' Here the Holy Ghost is described with a personal character; and probably the name is not to be understood metonymically for his gifts and graces. The meaning seems to be this,—the Spirit's efficiency in guiding and instructing them was a special gift of God conferred upon them. In this respect, though he was a sovereign Agent, yet he is said to act by the will of the Father, which is the same with his own will; for though the Persons in the Godhead are distinct, yet they have not distinct wills. Now, it is not an improper way of speaking to say, when a divine Person displays his glory in conferring a blessing upon men, that the display he makes of himself, and the blessing he bestows, are given. God is said, for example, to give himself to his people, when he promises to be a God to them. According to this mode of speaking, indeed, there is a discriminating act of favour conferred on men, which is called a gift; but this does not militate against the divinity of the Holy Ghost, though he is said to be given to them.

Another scripture quoted in the objection is that in which it is said, 'God gave them the like gift, as he did to us,' meaning the Holy Ghost. Here the phrase 'Holy Ghost' is plainly taken for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; the conferring of which is called, in the foregoing words, a being 'baptized with the Holy Ghost.' This is particularly explained in the scripture, formerly referred to, in which it is said, that 'on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.'<sup>f</sup> What this gift was, we learn from the following words, 'They spake with tongues, and magnified God.'

Again, the phrase 'Holy Spirit' in the passage, 'Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,'<sup>g</sup> is explained by another evangelist<sup>h</sup> to mean good things in general, and so includes the graces of the Spirit which accompany salvation. He reads the words, 'Your Father who is in heaven shall give good things to them that ask him;' so that here the Spirit is taken for all those blessings which he bestows upon his people in answer of prayer.

As for those scriptures in which the Spirit is said to be sent, either by the Father or the Son, they are not to be understood in the same sense as when the Son is said to be sent in his human nature, appearing in the form of a servant, to fulfil the will of God. When God is said to send his Spirit, the word 'send' is to be taken in a metaphorical sense. Sending imports as much as giving; and, when the Spirit is said to be given, the language has a peculiar reference to the grace which he was to bestow upon them. By this metaphorical way of speaking we are probably to understand, that the Spirit, who was to produce the effects, is a divine Person; and that the effects themselves are subservient to those works which are performed, and which demonstrate the personal glories of the Father and Son.

Again, when it is said by our Saviour, 'the Spirit shall receive of mine, and show it unto you,'<sup>i</sup> the words plainly mean, that the Spirit should apply those blessings which Christ had purchased by his blood, and so should show forth his glory. Still they signify the subserviency of the Spirit to the Son, only in working, or in so far as the application of redemption tends to accomplish its designed end.

<sup>f</sup> Acts x. 45, 46.

<sup>g</sup> Luke xi. 13.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. vii. 11

<sup>i</sup> John xvi. 14.



As to the scripture, in which the Spirit is said 'not to speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak,'<sup>k</sup> it does not argue, in the least, that he receives what he communicates; as if he were dependent on the Father for the knowledge of the things he is to impart, or that he has ideas impressed on his mind, as creatures are said to have. To suppose this is inconsistent with what has been before proved from scripture, namely, that 'the Spirit knoweth the deep things of God, even as the spirit of a man knoweth the things of a man,' or as an intelligent being is conscious of his own thoughts, or actions, not by information, but by an immediate internal perception. The sense, therefore, of the text in question is, that the Spirit shall communicate no other doctrines, and give no other laws, than what Christ had before given in the gospel; or that what he reveals is the same which Christ had given his disciples ground to expect. So far from militating against the Spirit's divinity, it proves the harmony and consent of what is suggested by one divine Person, with what had been before delivered by another. As to the peculiar expression, 'Whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak,' it is spoken after the manner of men, and is no more inconsistent with his divine omniscience, or the independence of it, than when God is said, in other scriptures, to know things by searching them, or, as it were, by inquiry. These, and similar expressions, by which God is represented by words accommodated to our usual way of speaking in reference to men, are, when applied to the Holy Ghost, to be understood in a way agreeable to the divine perfections, by abstracting from them every thing which argues the least imperfection; and they are to be viewed in the same light when some expressions, agreeable to human modes of speaking, are elsewhere used, with a particular application to the Father, without detracting from his divine glory.

It is again objected, as we saw, that the Spirit is said to have a distinct mind from God, as in the passage, 'God knoweth the mind of the Spirit;' and that he is represented as engaged in an act of worship, or as praying, or 'making intercession for us, according to the will of God.'<sup>l</sup> But it is plain, that, by 'the mind of the Spirit,' we are to understand those secret desires in prayer which are wrought in believers by the Spirit, when they want words to express them. They are said, instead of words, to address themselves to God, 'with groanings which cannot be uttered.' These are from the Spirit, as the Author of those secret desires which are known only to the heart-searching God, who knows the meaning of them, what it is we want. Our desires are hence called 'the mind of the Spirit,' as the Author of them, though they are subjectively our own mind or desires, which we want words to express. And when the Spirit is said to 'make intercession for us,' the phrase implies nothing else but his enabling us, whether in more or less proper modes of speaking, to plead with God for ourselves.

As to those expressions, in which the Spirit is represented as 'quenched,' or 'extinguished,' they are to be understood as a metonymy, whereby, as before mentioned, the gifts of the Spirit are put for the Spirit. When extraordinary gifts were first promised, the disciples were led to expect that they should be 'baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire;' that is, they should have the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, conferred upon them, and signified by the emblem of fiery tongues, that sat on them.<sup>m</sup> The reason of this emblem might probably be, that, as a necessary qualification for their preaching the gospel, they should be filled with an holy flame of love to God, and zeal for his glory, as well as with the gift of tongues, by which they might communicate his mind to the world. This privilege, which they had received, the apostle exhorts them not to forfeit or abuse, so as to provoke the Holy Ghost to take it from them; and the forfeiture or abuse of it is called 'quenching the Spirit.' This metaphorical way of speaking, therefore, must not be supposed to be inconsistent with his divinity.

#### *The Practical Use of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

I shall conclude my observations on questions connected with the doctrine of the Trinity with some inferences which more especially respect the practical improvement of the doctrine.

<sup>k</sup> John xvi. 13.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. viii. 26, 27.

<sup>m</sup> Acts ii. 3.



1. We may take occasion to observe the difference that there is between natural and revealed religion. The former respects the knowledge of God, so far as it may be attained without the help of divine revelation, and the worship which the heathen, who have nothing else to guide them but the light of nature, are obliged to give to the divine Being. The latter, which is founded on scripture, contains a display of the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is necessary to be known and believed; as it is the foundation of all revealed religion. The sum of Christianity consists in our subjection to, and adoring the Godhead, as subsisting in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. As the doctrine of the Trinity is eminently displayed in the work of our redemption, it is necessary for us to consider how it is accommodated to, and demonstrated by, all the branches of that work. The price which was given by our great Redeemer, has a value put upon it, in proportion to the dignity of his person; and lays a sure foundation for our hope of being accepted in the sight of God, on account of his obedience and sacrifice, which were of infinite value. And the application of redemption being a work which the Spirit, who is a divine person, has undertaken to perform, we have reason to expect that it shall be brought to perfection. Hence, they who are the objects of redeeming love and sanctifying grace, shall in the end be completely saved.

3. As it is necessary for us to adore and magnify the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for our inestimable privilege in the gospel; so we must observe the distinct glory which is to be given to each of the divine persons for the work of redemption. Whatever is done by the Mediator to procure this privilege for us, is considered, in scripture, as taking its rise from the Father, and affording reason for giving him glory. 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'<sup>a</sup> Whatever was done in the human nature, or by God incarnate, is, in a peculiar manner, the work of the Son; and a revenue of glory is due to him for it, who 'gave his life a ransom for many,' and thus displayed the highest condescension, enhanced by the infinite dignity of his person. And whatever work is performed in subserviency to the Mediator's glory, whereby the Spirit demonstrates his distinct personal glory, gives us occasion to adore him, in all the displays of his power, in beginning, carrying on, and completing the work of grace in the souls of men.

4. As to what respects that fellowship, or communion, which believers have with the Father, Son, and Spirit, it depends on the account we have, in scripture, of the distinct methods in which their personal glory is set forth. We have access to God the Father, through the mediation of the Son, by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit. 'Through him,' says the apostle, 'we have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.' And our hope of blessedness is the gift of the Father, who has prepared an inheritance for us; the purchase of the Son, on whose death it is founded; and the work of the Holy Ghost, as bringing us to, and putting us into, the possession of it.

5. This directs us as to the way of performing the great duty of self-dedication, to the Father, Son, and Spirit; to the Father, as our covenant God in Christ; to the Son, as the Mediator, head, and surety of this covenant; and to the Spirit, by whom we are made partakers of the blessings promised. In all these, and many other respects, we are to have a particular regard to the Persons in the Godhead, correspondingly to the way in which their personal glory is set forth in scripture.

6. As the Father, Son, and Spirit, are one, though we distinguish them as Persons, we must consider them as having the same divine perfections, the same divine understanding and will, lest, while we give glory to each of the Persons in the Godhead, we should suppose that there are more Gods than one. Hence, though the Person of the Father is distinct from that of the Son and the Holy Ghost, we are not to suppose that power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, or any other divine perfections, belong, in a more or a less proper sense, to one Person than another.

7. The doctrine of the Trinity is of use to direct us how we are to address ourselves to God in prayer. When in prayer, we call him our Father, we are not to

consider him in the same sense, as when he is represented as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we address ourselves to him, as the author of our being, the God of all grace, and the fountain of blessedness. Accordingly, the Son and the Holy Ghost are not to be excluded; unless we especially consider him as our Father in Christ, and so express our faith, with respect to his distinct personality from that of the Son and the Spirit. Though only one divine Person be particularly mentioned in prayer, the blessed Trinity is to be adored. Whatever personal glory we ascribe to one, as subsisting distinctly from the other, we must, notwithstanding, consider the Father, Son, and Spirit, as the one only living and true God.

Thus we have gone through this great and important subject, and have taken occasion, particularly, to insist on the chief matters in controversy relating to the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and considered the various methods taken to oppose it, both by the Socinians and the Arians, and endeavoured, not only to defend the deity of our Saviour and the Holy Ghost, by inquiring into the sense of those many scriptures on which our faith therein is founded, but to answer the most material objections which are brought against it. Our having enlarged more on it, than we shall do on several following answers, cannot be reckoned a needless work; for much has been written in opposition to it, whereby the faith of some has not only been shaken, but overthrown. I would never attempt to speak of this doctrine, or of any of the divine perfections, without being sensible of the difficulty of the subject, it being such as is not to be comprehended by a finite mind. I hope nothing will appear to have been suggested inconsistent with the essential or personal glory of the Father, Son, or Spirit. I may reasonably expect that allowances should be made for great defects; for it is but a little of God that can be known by us. When we pretend to speak concerning him, it will not be thought strange if we give occasion to any to say, what we have the greatest reason to acknowledge, that, in many instances, we cannot order our words, by reason of darkness.

[NOTE 2 L. *The Communication of the Divine Perfections.*—When Dr. Ridgeley had so well exposed the inappropriateness of the word ‘communication,’ he ought to have entirely discarded it. He tries to invest it with a new meaning, but, in reality, renders it meaningless and absurd. His views—quite justly as appears—will not allow him to say more respecting the modus of personality in the Godhead, than that ‘all the perfections of the divine nature are equally attributed to, or predicated of, the Father, Son, and Spirit.’ In using this language, he is on safe ground: he speaks consistently with the simple phraseology of scripture; he throws off the mystifying, pseudo-profound, and mischievous jargon of the scholastic theology; he is free from pretension to explain or define what scripture has not revealed, and what reason cannot comprehend; and he offers no premium and no incitement, by ‘great swelling words of vanity,’ to daring speculation, to Arian misconception, or to a man’s ‘intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.’ But why does not Dr. Ridgeley content himself with the language of his direct statement? why does he translate it into a technical synonyme, and try to make it comport with the phrase, ‘All the perfections of the divine nature are communicated?’ The word ‘communicate’—except when utterly explained away, and made arbitrarily to signify something altogether foreign to its ordinary acception—is far, very far from expressing Dr. Ridgeley’s views, or harmonizing with correct conceptions of the divine subsistence. Followed by the preposition ‘to,’ it denotes a person’s participation in anything by reception of it from another; and, followed by the preposition ‘in,’ it denotes his participation in it absolutely or by his own act. In both cases, however, it supposes the thing to exist before the participation takes place. One man communicates to another ideas or information; or one man communicates in a privilege which is common to a class. In either case, the object of communication, the thing participated, the information or the privilege, exists apart from the participant, independent of his causation, and prior to his act of receiving or enjoying it. Whether the words, *ἠχθονωνησιν σαρκος και αιματος*, may, as Dr. Ridgeley proposes, be justly translated, ‘They had flesh and blood communicated to them,’ is more than questionable; but if they be so translated, they must be understood as affirming or assuming that, abstractedly, flesh and blood are as extrinsic to the beings who ‘communicate’ in them, as the lessons of childhood are to the untutored intellect. Explain and restrict the word ‘communicate’ as he may, any writer who employs it to define the mode of the divine subsistence, will invariably convey to the mind of his reader some outline of the gross and egregiously wrong idea that the divine perfections were originally extrinsic to the persons of Deity. The simpler, the freer from technical terms, and the more directly accordant with the phraseology of scripture, any language on the incomprehensible or higher doctrines of revelation is, the more adapted will it be to edification, and the less likely to produce obscurity or phantasmagoria before the moral vision of a reader.—ED.]

[NOTE 2 M. *The Sonship of Christ.*—Dr. Ridgeley’s view of the Sonship of Christ is, that he is



Son as Mediator. He denies, not only his generation, but the eternity of his Sonship. The name 'Son,' or 'Son of God,' in other words, appears to him to designate, not our Lord's Deity, but his mediatorial person. He is not to be charged, indeed, with derogating from the doctrine that Christ is God; he is not to be charged even with denying that those passages assert him to be so which call him 'Son;' but he distinctly maintains that the name in question does not designate him as God,—that it does not in itself, like the name 'God' or 'Jehovah,' affirm his Deity,—that it is generically of the same import as the names 'Christ,' 'Saviour,' 'Redeemer,' 'Mediator,'—and that it did not appropriately or actually belong to him till the date of his incarnation. His doctrine may, accordingly, be termed the doctrine of mediatorial Sonship.

Now, to what is this doctrine opposed? What view of our Lord's Sonship does it impugn and condemn? Dr. Ridgley—if we conjecture his sentiments from the entire scope of what he says—would at once answer, it is opposed to the doctrine of Christ's generation. All the antagonist views which he states, all the extravagancies which he enumerates, all the censurable definitions and expositions which he quotes, have reference, not to the Sonship itself, but to the mode of its subsistence. He deals simply with the question of the eternal generation; and, having confronted and despatched this, he arrives, per saltum, at the doctrine of mediatorial Sonship. Now, the real question at issue is not, Is the Son generated, or is he not? Does his Sonship consist in the mode of his divine subsistence, or does it consist in the hypostatical union of his deity and his manhood? but it is, In what person, in his divine or in his mediatorial, is he the Son of God? How long—from eternity, or merely from the incarnation—has his Sonship existed? In what sense—as designative of his deity, or as designative of God-man Mediator—is the name 'Son' to be understood? The mode of his divine subsistence may not once be glanced at; the manner in which he is divinely a Son may be pronounced an improper subject of inquiry; the doctrine of his eternal generation may be ranked among the dogmata of the Platonizing fathers, or the bold speculations of the schoolmen; and, so far from the doctrine of the divine, eternal Sonship, being impaired or surrendered, it will appear in greater clearness than before, and stand out in stronger evidence, and be maintained with firmer tenure.

Sonship and generation are far, very far from being correlative ideas. Scripture speaks of sonship by creation, by adoption, by a renovating divine influence, by a pervading moral affection, by reception of Christian instruction, by ancestral connexion, and by literal generation. We read in it of the son of a parent, the son of an ancestor, the son of an adopting stranger, the spiritual son of a Christian minister, a son of God by the renewing agency of the Holy Spirit, a son of God by the creation of a holy but fallible nature, and a son of God by the creative and continually sustaining agency of divine power and beneficence. Thus, in senses all distinct and widely different from one another, a child, a remote descendant, a protégé of benevolence, a converted hearer of a Christian minister, a regenerated soul, man in his paradisaic capacity, and a holy angel, or 'angel of light,' are all denominated sons. To say that the word 'son,' in most of these instances, is metaphorical, and has a figurative allusion to generation, is to beg the question at issue and to contradict fact. What resemblance to generation is there in adoption, in pastoral usefulness, in an act of creation, or in the sustaining manifestation of the divine power? Just one general idea seems applicable to the various and apparently conflicting senses of sonship,—and that is sameness of nature; and this idea appears to be the key to the very frequent scripture Hebraism, of which 'son of the vine,' 'son of consolation,' and 'son of thunder,' are examples. The juice of the grape partakes the properties of the vine; a child partakes the nature of his parent, a descendant that of his ancestor, an adopted son that of his benefactor; a complacent speaker exerts the same influence as consolation, an arousing one the same as thunder; a convert homologates in principles and character with his spiritual teacher; a soul renewed by the Holy Spirit is 'a partaker of the divine nature' in knowledge and true holiness; and our first parents in paradise, as well as the unfallen angels, were created in the divine image. Sameness of nature with the objects to which they are allied, seems the only categorical idea which includes the whole under the name of sons. In the light of that idea, they are all styled sons, without violence to language, or extravagance of fancy; they all have sameness of substance, sameness of properties, or sameness of character and influence, with the objects constructively called their father. Yet how diversified are their sonships! How widely different in their origination, in their mode of subsistence, in the properties which distinguish them, and in the substances in which they exist! Who, then, will say that, according to the inspired use of it, the word 'Son' always or generally, or, in more than one of seven or eight distinct modes of application, includes the idea of generation? Who will deny that it expresses any relation, however remote, however sublimated, whether vegetable, animal, moral, rhetorical, or divine, which simply develops identity of nature?

Now, when the word is used to denote sameness of nature amid such an extensive variety of objects and relations,—to denote this without allusion to mode of subsistence, or the law by which the sameness exists,—why may it not be employed to denote sameness of nature, apart from any human analogy, between two persons of Deity? A believer in Christ is a son of God, because he homologates with him in will and in moral principle; Adam in paradise was a son of God, because he bore his image in intellectual and spiritual character, and in dominion over the inferior creation; and the second person of Deity is 'the Son of God,' 'God's only Son,' his 'proper Son,' his 'only begotten Son,' because he is 'in the form of God, and thinks it not robbery to be equal with God,' and is 'the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.'

There is peculiar appropriateness in the epithets 'only,' 'proper,' 'begotten.' They show the second person of Deity to have sameness of nature with the Father in an eminent and distinguishing sense,—a sense exclusive of all creatures, and peculiar to a divine person. As he is called 'a Son' to denote sameness of properties, so he is called 'a begotten Son' to denote sameness of essential nature. That sonship among creatures which is highest and most dignified, is the sonship of a child. Believers in Christ are, in consequence, not only called sons, to intimate their bearing God's moral image; but they are said to be begotten and born to denote the dignity and



value of their spiritual character and life. Now, the second person of Deity is called 'a Son,' to show that he has sameness of nature with his Father,—*'the Son,'* to show that he has that sameness in a way of eminence,—*'the only Son,'* to show that he has it in a sense exclusive of all other sons,—*'God's proper son,'* to show that he has it as regards essential deity,—and *'God's only begotten Son,'* to show that, as to dignity and glory and essential nature, he is God equal with the Father.

The doctrine of Christ's Sonship, when thus stated, appears to me clear, consistent, and scriptural; and is no more to be charged with the mysticisms and extravagancies of the scholastic advocates of eternal generation, than the doctrine of justification by faith is with the licentious inferences and expositions of Antinomians. Dr. Ridgeley, then, was far from being correct, when he passed, by one step, from the confutation of the mode of subsistence by generation, to the assertion of mediatorial Sonship. The doctrine which I have stated—the doctrine of divine or eternal Sonship—is that only which deserved or ought to have drawn his attention; and it is that which stands confronted to his views, and challenges them to the proof. He achieves nothing, except to shake off some idle dreams of the schoolmen, when he disproves 'the communication of the divine essence or personality to the Son.' He was to deal, not in speculations as to the manner of the divine Sonship, but with plain scriptural testimonies simply as to the fact. *Eternal filiation*, not *eternal generation*,—the fact, and not the mode of divine sonship, is what his theory principally opposes. What should be thought of an Anti-trinitarian who amasses daring, confused, contradictory, disparaging speculations of scholastic writers, respecting the manner in which God is three and yet only one; and who, after exposing their unwarrantableness and absurdity, persuades himself that he has disproved the fact of the Trinity? Yet the Anti-trinitarian would, in this case, act exactly the part, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, which Dr. Ridgeley, throughout the greater portion of his discussion, acts with respect to the doctrine of divine sonship or eternal filiation.

In one place, indeed, he notices the true question at issue, and attempts to show that Christ's participation of the divine nature is not the reason of his being called 'the Son.' Yet, in that very passage, he admits, or rather states, that the participation of his divine nature is the reason of his being called 'God's proper Son.' His words and reasoning are remarkable. "It is true," he says, "Christ's having the same nature with the Father, might be reckoned by some a character of sonship; as it contains one ingredient in the common idea we have of sonship among men. They, as sons, are said to have the same kind of nature as their fathers. So our Saviour's having the same individual nature with the Father, might give occasion to some to denominate him his Son. But though this may be the foundation of his being called God's proper Son, *ἰσὺς υἱός*, yet it is not his distinguishing character as a Son. For it would follow that the Holy Ghost, who has the same nature as the Father, would, for the same reason, be called his Son. But this is contrary to the scripture account given of him, as proceeding from the Father and the Son." Now, to say nothing of Dr. Ridgeley's rejecting the doctrine of the Spirit's procession, and, in consequence, of his not being entitled to assume it as true, and to adduce it as an objection, might he not have seen that what he says respecting the Spirit might have been said also respecting the Father,—that personal participation in the divine nature is equally, and in the same sense, true of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Either, then, that participation is consistent with exclusive and distinguishing titles, else the distinction of persons must cease to be recognised. 'In the beginning was the Word,' says the apostle John, 'and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Here, the affirming of Christ to be God, clearly proves that his title, 'the Word,' is a designation of his deity. But are we to be told that, because the Holy Ghost also is God, either he too must be called 'the Word,' else the title is not divine? Christ's being called 'the Son,' while it affirms his identity of nature with the Father, at the same time correlatively affirms the Father's identity of nature with him. The general idea of sameness of nature is as truly expressed in the relation of father to son, as in the converse relation of son to father. This idea, apart from all analogy to relations between creatures, is what the personal titles of Godhead appear eminently to express. Accordingly, while one is called the Father and another the Son, the third is called the Spirit. Now, with an intellectual, an intelligent being with a being who is 'a Spirit,' what more exactly expresses identity of nature than spirituality? But though the third person of Deity is called 'the Spirit,' 'the Holy Spirit,' to show that he has sameness of nature with the other persons of Godhead, or that he is 'the High and Holy One,' must we, after all, conclude that his name does not designate his deity, unless it is applied also to the Father and the Son? 'The Father,' 'the Son,' 'the Holy Spirit,' are distinctive names of the persons of Godhead; they appear all to denote just identity of nature; and, in beautiful and expressive consistency, they exhibit the great fundamental truth of revelation, that the one only God is three in personality. But what comes of Dr. Ridgeley's concession that Christ's "having the same individual nature with the Father, may be the foundation of his being called God's 'proper Son'?" Would it not follow from this, too, that either the title does not designate his deity, or else it must be applied likewise to the Holy Ghost? Dr. Ridgeley sees no such inference from the title God's 'proper Son;' and why should he see it from the title 'God's Son?' Besides, 'proper Son' does not seem to be a stronger title than 'only Son,' or especially 'only begotten Son;' and each of the three appears to be an epithetical definition of the simple title 'the Son,' just as 'the Holy Spirit' is of the simple title, 'the Spirit.' If Christ's being called God's 'proper Son' is founded on "his having the same individual nature with the Father," surely his being called his 'only Son,' his 'only begotten Son,' his 'well beloved Son,' or even simply his 'Son,' cannot be founded on anything different. If it be, there are two sonships,—one 'proper,' and one not so; the former divine and eternal, and the other mediatorial, and dating from the period of the incarnation. But as no party pretends that there are two, we must conclude that 'proper' or divine Sonship is what the name 'Son,' as applied to Christ, designates. Accordingly, just the same things, in the same connexion, are affirmed of God's 'proper Son,' and of God's 'Son.' He that spared not his proper Son, but delivered him up for us all, &c.; 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,' &c.,—Rom viii. 32; Gal. iv. 4.

Dr. Ridgeley, when speaking of the second person of Deity, as such, usually calls him 'the Son.' 'It is generally determined,' says he, 'that the Son and Holy Ghost have the same self-existent divine nature' as the Father. Again, when stating the doctrine of the Trinity, he says, 'We shall prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have distinct personal properties;' 'we shall endeavour to prove that the three persons in the Godhead, especially the Son and the Holy Ghost, are truly divine.' Is not his use of such language as this—his current and almost uniform use of it—an indirect, but conclusive, concession that the name 'the Son,' is a divine, and not a mediatorial title? How could he, or how can any man, speak distinctly of the second person of Deity, except by calling him 'the Son?' This name as directly and currently, in scripture, designates him, as the name, 'the Father,' designates the Father. The two names, besides, are strictly correlative. The first person of Deity is called 'the Father' relatively to the Son, and the second person is called 'the Son' relatively to the Father. To deny that 'the Son' is strictly a divine title, seems in effect to deny that 'the Father' is strictly a divine title. The two are correlative, not only as to their intrinsic import, but as to the manner in which scripture currently employs them. If a difference be observable in the use of them, it is that the first person of Deity is less uniformly, or with comparatively less frequency, called 'the Father,' than the second person is called 'the Son.'

I shall now glance at Dr. Ridgeley's strictures on some arguments in favour of the doctrine of divine sonship; and shall take occasion to interweave with my remarks some objections to the opposite doctrine.

The first argument on which he animadverts is founded on the passage in the second psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' He thinks he shall disprove this argument, if he show that the 'passage cannot respect the communication of the divine nature or personality to the Son.' But the question at issue, as we stated before, has reference, not to the doctrine of eternal generation, but to the doctrine of eternal filiation,—not to the manner in which Christ is the Son, but to the fact that he is the Son as God. What Dr. Ridgeley should, in consistency with his views, alone have attempted to prove, is, that the words, 'Thou art my Son,' are addressed to Christ, not as a divine person, but strictly and solely as Mediator. He is so far aware of the true state of the question, as to feel induced to show that *other* parts of the psalm are addressed to him in his mediatorial capacity. But what avails it to his purpose in what sense the context is understood, if the words themselves have reference to his deity? Because the context speaks of Christ as Mediator, is the name 'the Son,' therefore, not a divine title? On this principle of reasoning, there is probably not one instance of the application of a divine title to Christ in the Bible. Wherever even the names 'God,' 'the Word,' and 'Jehovah' are given to him, some statements are made in the immediate context respecting him as Mediator. Let Dr. Ridgeley's own arguments for the deity of Christ from his divine titles be examined; and they will all be found to be based on passages which more or less immediately describe him as the Saviour. But what would Dr. Ridgeley have thought, had any one inferred hence that the names 'God' and 'Jehovah' are not strictly divine, and, as applied to Christ, designate him only as Mediator? Yet he himself reasons exactly thus with respect to the name 'the Son.' His remarks on that name, as it occurs in the second psalm, might all, without losing a particle of their appropriateness, be transferred to the names 'God' and 'the Word,' as these occur in the first chapter of the gospel according to John. All that chapter, especially the commencing part of it, speaks of Christ distinctly as Mediator; it seems to have the exhibition of him as such for its express or specific design; it professedly sets him before the mind as God-man, as the Word made flesh, as the Creator tabernacled in human nature with the creature; yet it ascribes to him the work of making all things; it describes him as the author of spiritual life, as self-existent, as eternal; and it applies to him the titles, 'God,' 'the Word,' 'the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father,' 'the Word' whose glory was the glory 'as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' If Dr. Ridgeley's strictures on the argument founded on the second psalm, be transferred to an argument of just the same complexion and probably of more force founded on this chapter, they will, to persons who acquiesce in them, prove indeed that the phrase 'the only begotten Son' designates Christ only as Mediator, but they will, at the same time, prove that the names 'God' and 'the Word,' and the ascriptions to him of divine works and divine perfections, designate him in the same way. Dr. Ridgeley's argument proves too much, and therefore proves nothing: it leads to the conclusion, contrary to fact, that names and ascriptions confessedly divine are applicable to Christ only as Mediator; and it hence presumptively proves that 'the Son' is, rather than shows that it is not, a divine title.

Dr. Ridgeley finds that the words, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' are quoted in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; and because, in the context of the quotation, Christ is spoken of as 'appointed heir of all things,' and as 'having, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than the angels,' he infers that the title 'the Son' designates him as Mediator. Now, just the same chapter, in the course of exactly the same argument, quotes two other texts from the Old Testament scriptures,—in one of which Christ is called 'God,' and in the other 'Jehovah.' Are we, then, to conclude that these titles also are only mediatorial? Exactly the reasoning, be it what it may, which applies to the quotation containing the title Son, applies to the quotations containing the titles 'God' and 'Jehovah.' The nature, the design, the contextual position of the three quotations, are precisely the same. What inference can more fairly follow than that 'the Son' is a divine title?

But Dr. Ridgeley finds, further, that, jointly with the quotation from the second psalm, there is a quotation of the passage, 'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;' and he thus paraphrases the latter: 'He shall perform that obedience which is due from him as a Son; and I will give unto him those rewards which are due from a Father, who has committed this work to him, with a promise of conferring those revenues of mediatorial glory on him which should ensue



on his fulfilling it.' In vindication of the doctrine implied in this paraphrase, he elsewhere contends that dependence, subjection, and obedience are essential elements in the idea of sonship. 'The relation of sonship,' he says, 'always implies inferiority and an obligation to yield obedience.' He adds, indeed, 'I do not apply this, in every respect, to the sonship of Christ; which no similitude taken from mere creatures can sufficiently illustrate.' But, instead of not applying his notion in every respect, he ought not to have applied it in any. The idea of inferiority or moral subjection is just that part of the similitude—for '*similitude*,' Dr. Ridgeley confesses it to be—of sonship 'taken from mere creatures,' which detracts from the divine perfection of what belongs to Christ, and ought, in consequence, to be rejected. Inferiority and subjection, even among men, belong to sonship only in its infantile or immature condition; and at the period of manhood, they give place to independence and equality. Though love and veneration and deference never cease to be filial duty; yet personal accountability and independence of judgment do, and superiority of wisdom and power and resources may, supersede the inferiority and subjection of a state of childhood. Dependence or obligation to obey, in fact, is not a property of sonship, but only an accident. It belongs, not to the condition of a son as such, but to the condition of an imperfect, helpless, and erring being, who arrives by slow degrees at the maturity of his powers, and needs, in the earlier stages of his existence, to be fostered, corrected, and taught by parental wisdom and care. So far as mere sonship is concerned, the grand, if not the only idea, is sameness of nature. A child among men is subject simply because he is dependent; Adam in paradise and the angels of light are subject because they are creatures; and Christ as Mediator is subject to the Father, because he is incarnate in a created nature. Subjection seems, in every case, based on something different from sonship. While the idea of sonship is distinct and clear, whether we look at a child as possessing the same human nature as his parent, or at Adam in paradise as bearing the moral image of God, or at the second person of Deity as having the same subsistence and perfections as the first, the idea becomes confused and incongruous, as applied to any of the three cases, if we associate with it the notion of dependence. Subjection is one relation; sonship is another: the former is based on dependence; the latter is based on sameness of nature. Christ, as subject to the Father, is his 'servant'; as equal to him, is his Son. Speaking of him as Mediator, the Father says, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold;' but 'to the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and thou, Jehovah, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth.' As the Son, he sustains a character, and occupies a position, incompatible with that of a servant. 'Moses verily was faithful in all his house *as a servant*; but Christ *as a Son* over his own house. Every house is built by some man; but he who built all things is God.' Moses only occupied the house by appointment and under authority; but Christ built it and possessed it, as the independent, the divine proprietor. He, in consequence, 'is counted worthy of more glory than Moses; inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.' The house is the church; and it is Christ's own,—his own by erection, by creation, by exercise of that divine power and wisdom whereby he 'built all things.' Dr. Ridgeley himself, with justice and piquancy, treats his ownership of the church as an evidence of his deity. Now it is 'as a Son' that he is 'over his own house;' it is as 'the Son' that he is 'God who built all things;' it is as a Son that his character and position are exhibited antithetically to those of a servant. Moses was 'as a servant;' but Christ was 'as a Son.' (Heb. iii. 1—6.) Do we need further proof that the notion of subjection—a notion belonging to his incarnate state—has no reference to him as 'the Son'?

Dr. Ridgeley further finds the passage in the second psalm quoted in Paul's address at Antioch in Pisidia, (Acts xiii. 32, 33,) and applied to our Lord's resurrection; and he infers hence that 'the psalmist speaks of him as having finished his work of redemption,—at the time of his doing which he was raised from the dead, and then, in the fullest sense, he had the heathen for his inheritance.' Here, again, Dr. Ridgeley proves too much,—too much, at least, for his own cause. If, as he infers, David speaks of Christ as rising from the dead, or as 'having finished his work of redemption' when he became the Son, either there must be two mediatorial sonships, one dating from the resurrection and the other dating from the incarnation, else Christ was not mediatorially the Son at any period previous to his death. How, then, are we to understand the numerous passages, in the course of his public ministry and of his conferences with the Jews and with his disciples, in which he calls himself 'the Son of God?' The words, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' were not, we are told, addressed to him as Mediator, till he had 'finished his work of redemption;' what inference, then, can we draw but that, on all the occasions referred to, he is called 'the Son,' not as Mediator, but as the second person of Deity? The quotation from the second psalm in connexion with the resurrection, is, according to our view of the sonship, consistent and beautiful. Christ, at his coming into the world, was made known to be divine by the miraculous conception; and before he went out of it, he was again demonstrated to be divine by his supernatural resurrection. On account both of the manner of his incarnation, and the manner of his triumphing over death, he was 'declared to be,' what he really was, 'the Son of God,'—the equal of the Father.

The next argument on which Dr. Ridgeley animadverts is based on the account given of Wisdom in the eighth chapter of Proverbs. He admits that by 'Wisdom,' we are to understand Christ,—and Christ as 'the Son;' and he attempts to silence the evidence which the passage affords of eternal sonship, by making it speak the language merely of promise or decree. He, in particular, quotes the clause, 'I was set up from everlasting,' and paraphrases it thus: 'foreordained of God to be the Mediator and head of his elect.' His entire reply is of the same complexion. Now, on his principle of interpretation, all things whatever may be said to have been 'set up from everlasting,' for all were foreordained of God. He virtually represents the Son as saying only what might be said by every mortal, or even, if it could speak, by every shrub and pebble. A Socinian, too, might seize on his principle of interpretation, and explain away by it all the texts which affirm our Lord's eternity, and find in it ample sanction to his gloss on the declaration: 'In the beginning



was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' But indefensible and mischievous as Dr. Ridgeley's rule of interpretation is as applied to direct assertions of Wisdom's, or the Son's eternity, it becomes absolutely absurd when applied to some contextual statements. The depths, the mountains, the hills, the earth, it is to be remembered, were all 'foreordained,' and foreordained *from eternity*. Yet Wisdom, or the Son, says, 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water; before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth.' All this, according to Dr. Ridgeley's rule, just means, that Christ was ordained to be Mediator, before the earth and waters and hills were ordained to be created,—that he was ordained in eternity *before* eternity. Surely the offering of so disastrous an interpretation,—the offering of it, too, as an *only* argument for harmonizing the passage with his views,—is strong incidental evidence, is virtually a direct confession, that the statements respecting Wisdom assert the eternity of our Lord's sonship.

Another argument which Dr. Ridgeley notices, is founded on Heb. i. 2. 'God hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,' &c. But so far from impugning the argument, as he thinks he does, he only states in a clear light, though in words of his own, the doctrine which it maintains. 'By the expression, 'the express image of his person,' says he, 'I humbly conceive is meant that, though his divine nature is the same as the Father's, yet his personality is distinct.' Now sameness of nature with the Father and distinctness of personality, are just filiation or divine sonship; and they are affirmed of Christ both directly as 'the Son,' and indirectly as correlative to 'the Father.' 'The Son,' says the apostle, 'is the express image of his person,'—the express image of the person of 'the Father.' He is so, Dr. Ridgeley admits, not as Mediator, but as possessing sameness of nature with the Father, and distinct personality. These, then, and not his mediatorial properties, are the elements of his sonship.

Dr. Ridgeley next animadverts on an argument founded on the fifth chapter of the gospel according to John. But he quotes only one of about twenty verses on which the argument rests; and quotes it as though it contained the whole evidence appealed to, and without a hint that the pungency of the argument is derived from the entire scope of the chapter. No objection can be made to his comment on that particular verse. His views as to 'the Father's giving the Son to have life in himself,' are on the whole unexceptionable; but, in the connexion in which they stand, they are entirely thrown away: they afford no answer—though, in fact, no other is given—to the argument of his opponents. What we contend for, in appealing to the fifth chapter of John, is that, in a conference with the Jews, Christ asserts his true deity, that he does this by calling God 'his Father,' that the Jews understood him to claim divinity by his tacitly assuming to be 'the Son of God,' and that he confirmed them in their opinion by expressly calling himself the Son, and by claiming for himself, under that name or in that character, such honours as are due to Deity,—'that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' Dr. Ridgeley, when he comes to treat of our Lord's deity, sees this argument in all its beauty, and feels it in all its force; and he expends paragraphs upon it in showing how demonstratively it proves Christ to be God. Yet not a sentence which he so conclusively writes there, does not apply to the doctrine of divine sonship. He dwells with just emphasis on the construction which the Jews put upon our Lord's words, and on his proceeding to sanction and confirm it. Now the words which they construed to mean his assertion of true deity were, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work'—for 'they sought the more to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God;' and the words by which he sanctioned and confirmed their interpretation, claimed for him only the name of 'the Son,' and correlation with the Father—'for,' said he, 'as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.' What can be clearer than that it is as the Son our Lord claimed to be divine, that the Jews understood 'the Son of God' to be a divine title, and that both, by appropriating this name and by asserting his correlation with the Father, he made and confirmed their impression that he claimed to be truly God? If the passage proves his deity—and who can doubt that it does?—it proves it only through the medium of his divine sonship; for it directly asserts that he is divine as the Son, that he is divine correlatively to the Father; and it teaches the doctrine of his deity as a corollary of the doctrine of his divine sonship. Nor is it an objection to say that it affirms some things concerning him which can belong to him only as Mediator. The chief of these is, that he has received from the Father the appointment or office of Judge; and this, so far from being affirmed of him as the Son of God, is expressly ascribed to him in another and mediatorial character. 'The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also,' says the passage, 'because he is the Son of man.' If 'Son of God' were a mediatorial title, the import of this statement would be, 'He who is the Son of God is constituted Judge, because he is the Son of God.' Who can imagine that so unmeaning a statement—a matter is so, because it is so,—was made by divine wisdom? Is it not apparent that 'Son of man' is a mediatorial title,—that it is antithetic to the title 'Son of God,'—and that the ascription of it to Christ, in assigning the reason of his being Judge, necessarily implies that, as the Son of God, he is, not the Mediator, but the second person of Deity? He has authority given him to execute judgment, not because he is the Son of God—for as such he is equal with the Father; but because he is the Son of man—for as such he is the Father's messenger and servant.

Dr. Ridgeley, under the form of an objection to his own views, introduces an argument in favour of our Lord's divine sonship, founded on those texts in which the Father is said to have sent his Son into the world. The argument does not, as his statement of it implies, rest on one text; but

it is based on many,—in fact, on the current phraseology of the New Testament respecting the Son,—on all the passages which represent him either as having been sent or as having come. The Son is said to have become partaker of flesh and blood, to have come into the world, to have been sent under the law, made of woman, to have come in his Father's name, to have come forth from the Father into the world; and, in all such expressions, he is implied to have had pre-existence as the Son, or to be the Son in his divine nature. Dr. Ridgeley replies, that 'it is not necessary to suppose that he had the character of a Son before he was sent, though he had that of a divine person.' But the question respects not character, but personality. What we ask is, Does the name Son designate Christ's person as Mediator, or his person as God? Dr. Ridgeley's statement is ambiguous: he talks of the character of a Son, as distinguished from the character of a divine person. If by 'character' he mean a property, a quality, or a relation, he abandons his own view of the sonship, and makes it consist, not in our Lord's mediatorial personality, but in mediatorial properties or relationship. If, on the other hand, he mean by 'character' a person, what sense can be attached to the statement that 'it is not necessary to suppose that one sent has personality before he was sent?' He who was sent is called 'the Son.' What can be a fairer inference than that he was the Son when he was sent, and before he was sent? Dr. Ridgeley himself very justly and pungently draws the inference in support of our Lord's divine personality. 'His being sent into the world by the Father,' says he, 'which is frequently affirmed of him in the New Testament, proves that he is a distinct person from the Father; for a quality, relation, or property, cannot be said to be sent as the Son is.' Yet it is *the Son* who is sent. What follows but that, as the Son, he had, before being sent, distinct personality,—that, in other words, he is the Son as to his divine nature. To tell us that his being sent as the Son has reference to a *character*, is to say that 'a quality, relation, or property,' is sent; or if 'character' be understood in the sense of 'person,' it is either to admit the pre-existence, and consequently the divinity of his sonship, or to deny the obviously true principle of Dr. Ridgeley's reasoning respecting personality,—that to be sent presupposes a person.

The texts in question, besides, mention adjuncts of the Son's being sent which seem decisive of the pre-existence of his Sonship. 'God,' we are told, 'sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Here was humiliation. Here was the sending of a glorious person in a nature, or with an appearance abasingly different from that in which alone he had hitherto existed. All the meaning, all the appropriateness, all the force of the passage, are seen only when it is viewed as parallel to the declaration, 'He, being in the form of God, was made in the likeness of men.' Again, we are told, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.' Here was the manner in which he was sent; here were the adjuncts of his coming. He who was the Son of God was made of a woman: he who was the Lawgiver was made under the law. But, according to Dr. Ridgeley's theory, these were not the adjuncts with which the Son came, but the circumstances which constituted him the Son. If the doctrine of mediatorial sonship were true, the Son was not sent, but the sending of the second person of Deity made him the Son; or his being made of a woman, made under the law, constituted, not his being sent, but his assumption of sonship.

Dr. Ridgeley seems aware that his ground in opposing this argument is untenable; and he hence tries to show that the doctrine of Christ's mediatorial sonship is reconcilable with his pre-existence as the Son. 'If we suppose,' says he, 'that he had the character of a Son before he was sent into the world, it will not overthrow our argument. He was, by the Father's designation, an eternal Mediator, and, in this respect, God's eternal Son.' He forgets that he had used the argument from his being sent, to prove his divine pre-existence and personality; and he does not see—but who else does not?—that Socinians might now retort upon him and say: 'If we suppose that Christ had the character of God before he was sent into the world, it will not overthrow our doctrine that he is God only as a human Mediator. He was, by the Father's designation, an eternal Mediator and, in this respect, eternally God.' Besides, Dr. Ridgeley's purely figurative idea of pre-existence or eternal sonship, is utterly incompatible with the fact of being literally sent. 'If,' as he justly teaches, 'a quality, relation, or property, cannot be said to be sent,' how can that be said to be sent which does not exist at all, or exists only in purpose or by a figure? On the same principle that he talks of Christ's 'eternal sonship,' he might talk also of the eternal sonship of every angel and every redeemed soul. Angels and saved men were all as truly ordained to be sons of God respectively by creation and regeneration, as Christ was ordained to be Mediator. May it, therefore, be said, on the ground of the execution of the divine purposes respecting them, that God sent them 'into the world,'—sent them in the same sense in which he sent his Son? Yet monstrous and revolting as this conclusion is, it fairly follows from Dr. Ridgeley's premises. His attempt to show that mediatorial sonship is compatible with the fact of the Son having been literally sent, only affords additional, though indirect evidence, that Christ is the Son as to his divine nature.

I shall here, from among a number which might be adduced, mention two arguments for our Lord's divine sonship, which Dr. Ridgeley has omitted to notice. One of these is founded on the words: 'Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? who hath gathered the winds in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?' (Prov. xxx. 4.) Whoever doubts that these words describe Deity, and are not a general allusion to any imaginary god or power of the heathens whom they vainly supposed to have achieved divine works, may compare them with parallel texts in Job, Psalms, and Isaiah (Job xxxviii. 4, &c.; Ps. civ. 3, &c.; Isa. xl. 12, &c.); and he will there find phraseology, the same either in terms or in import, applied in the same way as here, to 'Jehovah,'—to 'Jehovah, God.' What then, but the doctrine of divine sonship is taught or implied in the second clause of the question, 'What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?'

The other argument which I shall mention is based on Rom. i. 3, 4. 'Concerning his Son Jesus



Christ, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' Here there seems evidently a twofold antithesis: 'made of the seed of David,' is antithetic to 'declared to be the Son of God;' and, 'according to the flesh,' is antithetic to 'according to the Spirit of holiness.' As 'the seed of David,' our Lord was 'made' (*γενόμενος*); but as 'the Son of God,' he was 'declared,'—declared by a miracle,—(*ἀποθνήσκων ἐν θανάτῳ*) 'miraculously declared by the resurrection from the dead.' Again, as 'the seed of David,' he was 'according to the flesh' (*κατὰ σαρκά*); but as 'the Son of God,' he was 'according to the Spirit of holiness,'—according to the divine nature (*κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγίων*). If the doctrine of mediatorial sonship were true, there would be no propriety, no correctness, in speaking of 'the seed of David,' of being 'made,' of being 'according to the flesh,' antithetically to 'the Son of God;' for, according to that doctrine, all the ideas expressed by these phrases are elements in the notion of the sonship, and cannot be antithetic. But how consistent, how expressive, is the passage, when we view the sonship as divine! Christ, according to his human nature, was the seed of David, and according to his divine nature was the Son of God: he was 'made' or 'became' the former in his incarnation, and was 'declared' or demonstrated to be the latter by his miraculous discomfiture of death.

We now pass to a brief notice of Dr. Ridgeley's arguments in favour of his doctrine. Later writers who advocate it must feel surprise that he does not quote Luke i. 35, in its defence: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' But though this text has of late been appealed to as the very pillar of the doctrine of mediatorial sonship, Dr. Ridgeley has perspicacity to see that, when viewed in that light, it is claimed more by the Socinians than the orthodox. He justly remarks, that 'a miraculous production is not a sufficient foundation to support the character of the Son of God;' and he might have added, that even if it were, it would render Christ the Son, not of the Father, but of the Holy Ghost. 'The glory of Christ's sonship,' he concludes, 'is infinitely greater than what arises from the miraculous conception.' He sees too—as who may not?—that the word translated 'called,' means, not 'designated' or 'denominated,' but 'declared,' 'made known,' 'acknowledged;' and he reads the latter part of the verse thus: 'That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called,' as he really is, 'the Son of God.' Why, then, we ask, did he not adopt the doctrine of divine sonship? No inference can appear to follow more fairly from premises, than this doctrine does from his remarks and reasoning. Yet he evades it; and, in its stead, adopts the conclusion that Christ is the Son of God by the union of the divine and the human natures. But what was the formation of that union? Was it not the incarnation,—the miraculous conception,—the very event which the passage in question records? But if the *formation* of the union, or the union in its stupendous and supernatural commencement, was 'not a sufficient foundation to support the character of the sonship of God,' how could the union itself, or the union as perpetuated, be 'a sufficient foundation?' The text in Luke, even in the light of Dr. Ridgeley's own exposition of it, appears to be strictly parallel to that at which I last glanced. Christ, as to his human nature, was the son of Mary; but, as to his divine nature he was the Son of God. His being 'made of a woman' was evidence that he was truly man; but his human nature being miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, was evidence that he pre-existed and is truly God. Because he was born of the Virgin, he should be acknowledged as the Son of man, and because he had miraculous evidence of incarnation, he should be acknowledged as the Son of God. The complexion of his advent to our world, just like that of his rising from the dead, miraculously declared him to be divine. The display or demonstration, in either case, of his sonship, was the display or demonstration of his deity.

Dr. Ridgeley's arguments in favour of the doctrine of mediatorial sonship—though he seems to menace us with them by the hundred, and to talk as if one existed in every text of the New Testament which speaks of Christ as the Son—are of only two classes, or, more properly, are just two in number, each being based on a class of texts.

His first argument rests on the numerous passages in which our Lord is called, 'the Christ, the Son of God.' The instances which he quotes, and separately comments on, are so closely akin or rather identical in nature, that two—the first and second which he adduces—develop all the argument from the whole. 'Peter's confession,' says he, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' speaks of our Lord as Christ, or the Mediator, that is, as the person who was invested in the office, and came to perform the work of the Mediator; and, as such, it calls him 'the Son of the living God.' Now the name, 'the Christ,' according to Dr. Ridgeley's own showing and agreeably to general consent, means just 'the Mediator.' Yet, this, too, is what, according to his argument, the title, 'the Son of the living God,' means. He, hence, represents Peter as uttering this extraordinary tautology: 'Thou art the Mediator, the Mediator;' or, 'Thou art the Messiah, the Messiah.' But let the title, 'the Son of God,' be understood as designating our Lord's deity, and the confession is consistent and expressive: 'Thou art the Mediator, the true God'—'Thou art the Redeemer of men, the Creator of the ends of the earth.' The question of the High Priest, and our Lord's answer to it, are exactly parallel to Peter's confession. 'So,' says Dr. Ridgeley, when the High Priest asked our Saviour, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?' his question means, 'Art thou the Messiah, as thou art supposed to be by thy followers?' Here, according to Dr. Ridgeley, is the same tautology as before: 'Art thou the Christ, the Christ?' or, 'Art thou the Messiah, the Messiah?' In this instance, however, he is not satisfied with one tautology; but proceeds to elicit another. 'Our Saviour,' says he, 'replied to him,' 'Thou hast said,' that is, 'It is as thou hast said;' and then he describes himself in *another character*, by which he is often represented, *namely, as Mediator*, and speaks of the highest degree of his mediatorial glory to which he shall be advanced at his second coming: 'Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power.' Now, might not Dr. Ridgeley have seen that



as the character in which our Lord proceeds to speak of himself is that of 'the Son of man,' and that as this is 'another character' from that in which the High Priest had spoken of him,—'another character' from that of 'the Son of God.'—both cannot be identified with the character of Mediator? Might he not have inferred also, that the title, 'the Son of man,' being, according to his own showing, designative of our Lord as Mediator, the title, 'the Son of God,' must be designative of him as a person of the Godhead? Besides, the High Priest would not have charged him with blasphemy, for calling himself the Messiah. The Jews, from the greatest to the least of them, gave a ready, a credulous hearing to almost any one who claimed to be the Christ; and whenever they charged our Lord with blasphemy, they viewed him, and viewed him rightly, as claiming to be divine. But the High Priest and all the multitude which stood before him, when Jesus avowed himself to be the Son of God, exclaimed, 'He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses?' 'Here,' says Dr. Ridgeley, when treating of our Lord's deity and conclusively proving that great doctrine from this passage, 'Here our Lord was asked, Whether he were the Christ, the Son of God? that is the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, who governed his Church of old, and whom they acknowledged to be a divine person or the Son of God; and here he asserts himself to be the Son of God, and to have a right to the glory of a divine person.' (See Section, 'Proofs of Christ's Deity from his own statements.') How sound is this statement—how conclusive the inference which it embodies—but how incompatible with the doctrine of mediatorial sonship! If Christ asserted his deity at all—and the High Priest, the multitude of Jewish spectators, and Dr. Ridgeley himself, all understood him to assert it—he asserted it only by avowing himself to be the Son of God. He was divine, he had a distinct character from that of Mediator, he had pre-existence, he had supreme glory, he urged a claim which the High Priest unbelievably and wickedly pronounced blasphemous, he asserted himself to be equal with the Father, simply by calling himself 'the Son.' The remarks we have now made apply in substance to all the texts, noticed or not noticed by Dr. Ridgeley, in which the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' jointly occur.

Dr. Ridgeley's second or remaining argument in favour of the doctrine of mediatorial sonship, is based on the class of texts which speak of Christ as Mediator, and at the same time call him the Son. We do not need to notice any of the particular examples which he selects for illustration. The entire principle of his argument is wrong and indefensible, and is again and again, both overtly and practically, refuted by himself. Almost every line of his very correct statement of the personal work of the Son, in his section on 'the Economy of Persons in the Godhead,' might be quoted in refutation. Nearly all his reasonings to prove our Lord's deity also set it at defiance. If, in fact, 'the Son of God' were not a divine title because some passages in which it occurs speak of Christ as Mediator, almost every application to him of a divine title in the New Testament, and almost every ascription to him of divine perfections, divine works, or divine worship, would, for the same reason, be annulled or silenced. Christ as Mediator, is properly designated either by a divine title, or by a title descriptive of his humanity; for, as Mediator, he is both God and man. All we can infer as to the quality of a title when applied to him in that character, must be learned from the context, from internal evidence, or from other passages in which it occurs; and, according to the evidence thence elicited, it may strictly designate our Lord as God, or describe him as the Messiah, or refer to his human nature or incarnate state. To infer that a title is mediatorial which occurs in connexion with statements of mediatorial works or office, is to set at defiance the strong, manifold, conclusive evidence that 'the Word,' 'God,' 'Jehovah,' as applied to Christ, are divine titles. 'Son of God' is proved by other scriptures, just as these titles are, to designate our Lord's deity; and when found, as they are, in texts which speak of him as Mediator, it must, like them, be understood in its legitimate or ordinary sense. In the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, to which we had already occasion to refer, we have a fair example: Christ is there spoken of as Mediator, and he is designated 'the Son,' 'God,' and 'Jehovah.'

I shall close my remarks on our Lord's sonship with a brief historical statement,—designed not as an argument, but only as an illustration, or as incidental corroborative testimony. Of the ten extant creeds of the period preceding the fourth century, one speaks relatively of the Son, mentioning 'Jesus Christ,' and calling God 'his Father;' another reads 'the Son;' two read 'his Son,' two read 'the Son of God;' one reads 'his Son, the Word, Son of man and Son of God;' another reads 'Jesus Christ, the Lord, truly human and truly divine;' and another reads, 'the only begotten Son, the living and irresistible Word, the only Son of the only Father, God of God.' The original harmonies of the ten creeds seem all to have read, 'his only begotten Son;' and all the Greek copies of the Apostles' Creed, or those used in the oriental churches, retain this reading to the present day.

The Jews, the apostles, and all the early Christians, appear to have understood this phrase, or any language analogous to it, to assert our Lord's true deity. To confess Jesus to be 'the Son of God,' was to acknowledge his supreme power and authority, and his perfect equality with the Father; just as to confess him to be 'the Christ,' was to acknowledge his being of the seed of David, and the Saviour of the world. When, on one occasion, he said to the Jews, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' they 'sought to kill him,' assigning as the reason of their malice, that 'he said God was his Father, making himself equal with God;' and when, on a subsequent occasion, they actually took up stones to stone him for calling himself the Son of God, they remarked, in answer to a remonstrance from him, 'For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.' All the early Christians and primitive churches appear to have understood, in the same way, that 'the Son,' and especially 'the only Son,' and 'the only begotten Son,' are strictly appellations of Deity. Novatus, the founder of the evangelical sect of the Novatians, and the author of a work on the doctrine of the Trinity which was highly appreciated during centuries after he wrote, says, 'As our Saviour's being the Son of man declares his humanity, so his being the Son of God is an undeniable proof of his divinity;' again, 'He is not only a man because the Son of man, but he is also God because the Son of God.' Cyril

of Jerusalem, who wrote about the year 370, who, indeed, had so far Platonized as to speculate on the modus of the sonship, and had adopted the notion of generation, but who, nevertheless, is a witness as to belief in the fact of divine sonship—says, ‘When thou hearest Christ called a Son, do not think him to be an adopted Son, but a Son by nature, an only begotten Son; for he is called the only begotten, because there is none like him as to either the dignity of his deity, or his generation from the Father.’ Athanasius, who wrote a little before Cyril, and in circumstances similar to his, says, ‘We believe in one only begotten Word, born of the Father, without beginning of time, from all eternity, being not a division from the impassible nature, or an emission, but a perfect Son.’ Several other of the early Christian authors write exactly the same sentiments; and though, like Cyril and Athanasius, they unwarrantably venture to speak, in an expository way of the scriptural epithet ‘begotten,’ they are not to be viewed as having on less secure ground maintained the fact of divine sonship, because they unadvisedly speculated as to its manner. Even the Arians, after discarding other evidences of our Lord’s divine dignity, admitted the names ‘Son’ and ‘only begotten Son’ to prove his being ‘like God.’ These names were a grand defence, on the part of the orthodox, against their heresy. The use and exposition and admitted force of the names, not only prevented Arianism from degenerating into such a system as modern Socinianism, but obliged it to rise higher and higher in definitions of the Son’s dignity, till it finally merged in orthodoxy, and was abandoned by its followers.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 N. *The Spirit of Adoption*.—The rule which Dr. Ridgeley proposes to be observed in translating phrases which mention the Spirit, is sound and important; but does not seem to apply to the principal instance which he adduces for illustration. ‘The Spirit itself,’ *αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα*, in Rom. viii. 16, may be translated, ‘This very Spirit,’ ‘the same Spirit,’ or ‘that Spirit;’ and clearly refers to ‘the Spirit of adoption,’ *πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας*, mentioned in the preceding verse. Now, ‘the Spirit of adoption,’ or rather ‘the Spirit of sonship,’ is antithetic to ‘the spirit of bondage,’ or ‘the spirit of servitude,’ *πνεῦμα δουλείας*. The believers to whom Paul wrote had ‘not received the spirit of servitude again to fear,’—to crouch and be in terror like slaves; but they had ‘received the Spirit of sonship, whereby they cried, Abba, Father,’—rejoicing and obeying like children. The ‘spirit’ from which they had been delivered was ‘the old man,’ ‘the flesh,’ ‘the carnal mind,’ the unregenerated, earthly, corrupt natural character; and the ‘Spirit’ by which they had become animated was ‘the new man,’ the spiritual mind, ‘the new creature,’ the holy, heavenly, devotional, filial character of the renovated soul. ‘This Spirit’—which distinguished them as sons, and embodied the dispositions and hopes and joys of children—‘cried, Abba, Father;’ and bore witness with their spirit, *τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἡμῶν*, with their own mind, with their intellectual consciousness, ‘that they were the children of God.’

The ‘Spirit of sonship’ is unquestionably produced and sustained by the Holy Spirit; but is not the Holy Spirit himself. The phrase is just one of the frequent and expressive metonymies of the New Testament, by which the cause is put for the effect,—the agent for his work,—the Holy Spirit for the graces he bestows and the dispositions he creates. The metonymy occurs in a strong form in Gal. iv. 6: ‘And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of God’s Son, because he testifies of him in his word and by his operations, and because he subdues souls to his authority, and maintains in them obedience to his faith; but, in the passage in question, he seems clearly to be spoken of metonymically for the effects he produces, or the hopes and affections which he originates and sustains. If by the Spirit of God’s Son we understand the Holy Spirit personally, we have the assertion that *he*, not the new man which he creates, not the element of Spirit sonship which he sustains, cries, ‘Abba, Father.’ But as the nature of the case, and the parallel text in Romans, prove that the spiritual child is what cries ‘Abba, Father,’ we must conclude that the Holy Spirit is spoken of, not personally, but as represented by his work in the believing soul.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 O. *Substitution of ‘Lord’ for ‘Jehovah.’*—There seems good reason why ‘Jehovah’ in the Old Testament is translated ‘Lord’ in the New. The language of the inspired writers of the New Testament was Hellenistic Greek. It was such Greek as the Jews understood and spoke,—the Greek of the Septuagint; and this language did not contain the word Jehovah, but substituted for it the word *Kyrios*. Besides, even classical Greek contained neither a word, nor proper elements for forming one, which might have strictly represented the word ‘Jehovah.’ The substitution of this name by *Kyrios* is not different, in principle or effect, from the substitution of *אלהים* by *θεός*. The latter name in Hebrew has its peculiar and expressive meaning as truly as the name *יהוה*; indeed, additional to its distinguishing radical significance, it possesses a shade of meaning of no small importance connected with its plural form. Yet this name is uniformly translated *θεός*, for the simple reason that, among existing vocabes of the Greek language, or vocabes which might have been framed from its elements, that word most nearly expressed the requisite idea. Apparently for just the same reason, *יהוה* is translated *Kyrios*. In three instances, indeed, (Rev. i. 4, 8; iv. 8.) that name is actually used in the New Testament,—used according to its peculiar and distinguishing significance,—but used in the form of a periphrasis, probably the only form in which the Greek language admitted of its being expressed. But while ‘he who is, and who was, and who is to come,’ is a suitable description, it cannot properly be used as an appellation; and hence does not, in general, take the place occupied by the single word, ‘Lord.’—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 P. *The Angel Jehovah*.—Dr. Ridgeley, instead of discussing the texts respecting ‘the Angel of the Lord’ in answer to an objection, might have advantageously employed them as the basis of positive and strong arguments. Not only do they afford no colour to the allegation that the name ‘Jehovah’ is applied to a created angel, but they furnish direct and manifold evidence of our Lord’s true deity. The words *מלאך יהוה*, viewed apart from collocation or context, are capable of being translated either ‘the angel of Jehovah,’ or ‘the Angel Jehovah.’ *מלאך* is a masculine, singular noun, not subject to change when joined to a pronominal suffix or to a governing noun.



Hence when it and יהוה occur together, the context alone must determine whether they are not nouns in apposition,—appellatives, the one official and the other essential, of the same person. Now, the person to whom they are applied is uniformly spoken of in terms which are utterly inapplicable to a creature. No created angel is ever introduced to our notice in such a distinguishing and glorious manner as he. Works are frequently ascribed to him, the performance of which implies omnipotence. His name, as in the narrative of his wrestling with Jacob, of his appearance to Manoah, and his manifestation to Moses, is used interchangeably with the name אלהים; and in the last of these instances, as well as in two others, (Judges vi. 11—16; ii. 1—5.) is used interchangeably also with the name 'Jehovah.' On these grounds, we cannot but infer that he is not a created angel,—that he is truly a divine person,—that the nouns יהוה and בלזך, which designate him, are placed in apposition, the one denoting him in his deity, and the other denoting him in his office.

While 'the Angel Jehovah' is mentioned identically with 'God' or 'Jehovah,' he is also mentioned distinctly,—a fact which harmonizes with the doctrine of unity in the divine essence and distinction in divine persons. In the story of Balaam and Barak, in the course of which 'the Angel Jehovah' is repeatedly mentioned, it is said: 'God's anger was kindled because he went, and the Angel Jehovah stood in the way;' and again, 'Jehovah opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel Jehovah standing in the way.'

That 'the Angel Jehovah' was the second person of Deity, who should in the fulness of time become incarnate as Mediator between God and man, appears from comparing Malachi iii. 1, on the one hand, with Luke vii. 27, and, on the other, with Judges ii. 1: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in.' This passage our Lord quoted at the commencement of his public ministry; applying the former part of it expressly to John the Baptist, and the latter part tacitly, but certainly, to himself. 'This,' said he, speaking of John, 'This is he of whom it is written, I send my messenger before thy face; he shall prepare thy way before thee.' If John the Baptist was the messenger who prepared the way, our Lord, by necessary consequence, was 'the Angel of the covenant who should suddenly come to his temple.' Now, that the Angel of the covenant was the Angel Jehovah, appears from the title to which we referred in the book of Judges: 'The Angel Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, *I will never break my covenant with you.*' Thus, 'the Angel Jehovah' is manifestly 'the Angel of the covenant,' and 'the Angel of the covenant' is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that 'the Angel Jehovah' is our blessed Lord being now established, a vast volume of evidence is unfolded of his true deity. The name בלזך יהוה is itself a divine name,—as strictly so as the simple name 'Jehovah.' The nouns of which it is composed, being placed in apposition, have the force and significancy of independent nominatives. יהוה, when joined with בלזך, is, in consequence, as unrestricted in its import as if it stood alone. Every passage, therefore, in which the name 'the Angel Jehovah' occurs, is an instance of the application to our Lord of the supreme and incommunicable name of Deity. All the passages, also, in which that name is used interchangeably with 'God' or 'Jehovah,' are instances of the twofold application to him of the divine name. If we look, too, at the passage quoted from the book of Judges, we find 'the Angel Jehovah' saying that it was he who led the Israelites up out of Egypt, who made the covenant with them which constituted them a peculiar people, and who swore to their fathers that he would give them the land of promise. We must hence infer that when the names 'God' and 'Jehovah' occur in connexion with the very numerous statements of these events, they are directly applicable to 'the Angel Jehovah,' our Lord and Saviour.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 Q. *Proof of Christ's Deity* from Rom. ix. 5.—Dr. Ridgeley misses the point of the argument. From the manner in which he states it, he wears the appearance of taking for granted the thing to be proved. The proof that the clause, 'who is over all, God blessed for ever,' refers to Christ, consists, not in the human and the divine nature being 'mentioned together,' but in the clause which designates the former, *κατα σαρκα*, being antithetic. The same phrase occurs in Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, and, in each of the verses, is opposed to *κατα πνιμα*. It occurs also in Rom. i. 4, and is there opposed to *κατα πνιμα ἁγιωσυνης*. In these, and other passages, it is manifestly antithetic; nor can it be otherwise understood in Rom. ix. 5. Had the apostle intended to say merely that Christ was descended from the fathers, he could not, without gross tautology, have added, 'concerning the flesh.' If, as the Socinians allege, Christ was a mere man, he could be spoken of at all, or spoken of especially, as descended from the fathers, only *κατα σαρκα*. Hence, to have added this phrase was, on the Socinian hypothesis, or according to the Socinian interpretation of the passage, an unmeaning accumulation of words. The phrase, to have any import or propriety, must antithetically refer to some quality or idea to which 'the flesh,' or human nature, is opposed. This quality can be found only in what immediately follows, 'who is over all, God blessed for ever;' and it is pointed out, or determined, by the relative *ὃς*, which looks back to *ὁ Χριστος* as its antecedent.

Dr. Ridgeley thinks his stricture on the Socinian emendation only 'a probable argument.' But his statement, that, 'whenever the words are so used in the New Testament, that they may be translated, 'Blessed be God,' they are disposed in a different form or order from that in which they occur here,' is abundantly defensible. Besides, to render the words *Θεὸς ὑπεράνωτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*, 'Blessed be God for ever,' converts them into a doxology, in utter defiance of contextual coherence or connexion. If, too, the words are a doxology,—if they are to be constricted apart from what precedes them,—*Θεὸς* could not have appeared, as it does, without the article. Understanding the passage as our translators did, *Θεὸς* and *Χριστος* are designations of the same person; and *ὃς*, having been used before *Χριστος*, did not need to be repeated before *Θεὸς*. But, in order that the concluding clause may have connexion and meaning within itself, the appearance of *ὃς* before *Θεὸς* is indispensable. What then, can we infer from the absence of the article, or from the antithetic power of *κατα σαρκα*, but that, in the terms of our translation, 'Christ is over all, God blessed for ever?'—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 R. *The Doctrine of the Greek Article*.—Dr. Ridgeley here states, in limine, a doctrine respecting the Greek Article, which is of great importance, and which, since his time, has drawn much attention from the learned, and been established on an inextinguishable basis. The doctrine, as stated by Dr. Ridgeley, is essentially correct; and, as now investigated and proved, it affords, not 'a probable argument,' but a series of strong irrefutable arguments in favour of our Lord's true deity. Mr. Granville Sharp was the first writer who brought the doctrine fairly before the public view; and he was followed, first by Dr. Wordsworth, and next by Dr. Middleton, bishop of Calcutta, the latter of whom, in a considerable volume on the subject, has presented the doctrine in all its force and beauty, and fortified it by innumerable appeals to authority. The doctrine is this: Whenever two or more personal nouns, either substantives or adjectives, of the same gender, number, and case, are joined by *xai*, and preceded by an article, not repeated before the second or subsequent nouns, they denote only one person. A corollary of the doctrine is, that, when two personal nouns are joined by *xai*, and denote different persons, while qualities are implied which might exist in one person, either they must both want the Article, or both have it. With a very few exceptions, all Greek, whether that of the classic writers, or that of the early Christian authors, is constructed in accordance with this doctrine. The exceptions, too, are only apparent, occurring merely in instances of qualities so incompatible, or names so manifestly distinct, that they could not possibly be understood to belong to the same person.

The arguments which the doctrine I have stated elicits for our Lord's true deity, are various and of high importance. The following are the chief:—The text quoted by Dr. Ridgeley is proved by it to bear, as a matter of necessity, the translation which he proposes: 'Looking for the blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour.' Another passage (2 Pet. ii. 1.) reads in our version: 'Through the righteousness of God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' This ought to be: 'Through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.' A third passage (2 Thess. i. 12.) reads: 'According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.' This ought to be: 'According to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.' A fourth passage (1 Tim. v. 21.) reads: 'I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.' This ought to be: 'I charge thee before God, even the Lord Jesus Christ.' A fifth passage (Eph. v. 5.) reads: 'In the kingdom of Christ and of God.' This ought to be: 'In the kingdom of Christ, even God.'—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 S. *Genuineness of 1 John v. 7*.—When a Trinitarian shows tenacity in maintaining the genuineness of 1 John v. 7, he wears an appearance of having an empty or ill-furnished armoury for the defence of his faith. The doctrine of the Trinity stands on a basis of evidence so strong and broad, and is bulwarked by arguments so numerous and inextinguishable, that there needs be no tilting with the opponents of it as to the genuineness of this much-disputed text. The evidence for the interpolation of 1 John v. 7, too, is, to say the least of it, such as should inspire great caution and no small diffidence.

Biblical literature was in a low state in Dr. Ridgeley's days, compared to that to which it has since arisen; and it afforded him faint light for the investigation, respecting this text, on which he entered. Yet, faint as it was, he has some appearance of not having duly availed himself of it, or of having misconceived the evidence which it revealed. He certainly says more respecting the genuineness of 1 John v. 7, than facts, even as they were known in his day, will well warrant. 'It must be allowed,' he says, 'that there is a considerable number of manuscripts in which the text is inserted.' All the manuscripts yet discovered, which contain the first epistle of John, are one hundred and twelve in number. Only three of these contain the verse in question; one of which is a manuscript of the *seventeenth* century, another a copy from the *printed text* of the Complutensian polyglot, and the third, the '*Codex Dubliniensis*,' a manuscript which no writer has asserted to be of higher antiquity than the eleventh century, and which most critics date so low as the fifteenth or the sixteenth. Against the evidence—if evidence it may be called—of these three manuscripts, is arrayed the evidence of *one hundred and nine*, including all the manuscripts of the highest antiquity and greatest value.

Again, Dr. Ridgeley says, 'It is less to be wondered at that the text is left out in *some* ancient versions.' Now it is left out in *all* the ancient versions, except the Vulgate or Latin. All the manuscripts even of this version have it not; and those which have it, vary greatly in the manner in which they read it.

Further, Dr. Ridgeley says, 'it is not quoted, indeed, by the fathers who wrote in the fourth century, namely, Athanasius, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Augustine, and some others.' Now *fifty* fathers, or upwards, who wrote on the divinity of Christ, on the Trinity, or on topics intimately connected with the text, do not quote it. All the Greek fathers omit it. Yet many of them quote both what precedes and what follows it; and do so in evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity. Is it to be imagined that, if the verse had been before them, if they had known of its existence, they would have quoted the words respecting the three earthly witnesses in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, and, at the same time, have taken no notice of the words respecting the three heavenly witnesses?

Dr. Ridgeley's principal arguments seem to be two. In one, he proposes difficulties respecting the loss of ancient manuscripts, and the ascertaining of the comparative antiquity of extant ones; and arrives at the conclusion that 'the genuineness or spuriousness of the text is not to be determined only or principally by inspection of ancient manuscripts.' Here he occupies untenable and dangerous ground. Were his argument sound, it would vindicate almost any interpolation, and unsettle all the splendid evidences of a pure text which have been accumulated by the valuable labours of Wetstein, Griesbach, and Kennicott. His other chief argument is based on the supposed quotation of the text by Cyprian. But even if all doubt were removed as to Cyprian's words being a quotation of it, nothing more would be accomplished than to afford proof, or rather illustration.



that the text was found, so early as the third century, in some copies, at least in one, of the Latin version. The Latin, as I have stated, is the only one of the ancient versions which has the text. That version was the authority from which Cyprian quoted,—if he quoted at all. Hence, even if his voice be allowed all the importance which Dr. Ridgeley attaches to it, it is answered by twenty Latin fathers who wrote on subjects connected with the doctrine of the Trinity, but did not quote the text,—by all the Greek fathers,—by all the oriental ancient versions,—and by all ancient manuscripts of the Greek text now known to exist.

With such facts before him as I have hinted at, a judicious writer will be slow to assert the genuineness of 1 John v. 7. Every apology is to be made for Dr. Ridgeley, on account of the state of Biblical literature at the period when he wrote. Any writer now, however, cannot well plead excuse; and if he assert the genuineness of the text in question, and seem tenacious of it in connexion with the doctrine of the Trinity, he may not only prejudice that all-important doctrine in the estimation of an Anti-trinitarian, but give unjust occasion to the enemies of revelation to question the general purity of the Sacred Text. Just those principles and reasonings which afford us firm assurance of possessing every where else the pure text of the divine word, seem to demand that the genuineness of 1 John v. 7. should not be asserted. But Anti-trinitarians have obtained no triumph, no concession, no advantage, when we cease to adduce it. We meet them still on the same ground, and with all the same triumphant materials of refutation, as the advocates of orthodoxy in the early centuries, and during the stormy but futile rage of the anti-Nicene controversy. The doctrine of the Trinity is interwoven with the entire scriptures, and expressly exhibited in passages too numerous to be appealed to in any one debate.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 T. 'The Eternal Spirit' through whom Christ 'offered himself.'—The truth asserted in the passage in which the phrase 'the Eternal Spirit' occurs, is the infinite sufficiency of Christ's atonement. The blood of Christ, the apostle states, is able to 'purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God'—it is able to do this, he says, because Christ was 'without spot,' because he offered himself 'to God,' and because he offered himself 'through the Eternal Spirit.' Looking simply at the design of the passage, at its contextual connection, and at the nature of the truth it teaches, one would readily suppose that, by 'the Eternal Spirit,' is to be understood our Lord's deity.

In the economy of redemption, the work of atonement, in all its parts, belongs peculiarly to the Son. But what part or property of it is more prominent or characteristic, than its possessing intrinsic sufficiency,—infinite moral worth? Our Lord's holiness, too, both as priest and as sacrifice, was strictly his own. 'Such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,' Heb. vii. 26. 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot,' 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. The divine dignity of our Lord, his being truly God while he was truly man, was exactly that which rendered his sacrifice sufficient, and his obedience magnifying to the divine law. 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,' Acts xx. 28. 'God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sin-offering condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit,' Rom. viii. 3, 4.

The work of the Holy Ghost, in the economy of redemption, is to 'testify of Christ,' to 'take of his and show them' to men, and, in a process of influence on the understanding and the heart, to apply the results of atonement and intercession. By him the sacred writers were inspired, the prophetic and apostolic miracles were wrought, and the hearts of enemies to the gospel are subdued; because in these works, as well as in others which he performs, Christ as the Mediator is exhibited, and the design of redemption is practically accomplished. Our Lord is the Christ or the Messiah—the administrator of the dispensation of grace, the Priest and the King in Zion—as anointed with the Holy Spirit. He is anointed with the oil of gladness, above all others who ever had a heavenly unction: 'the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.' His anointing, however, has reference to his administration,—to his wielding a sceptre and ruling over a kingdom,—to his 'sitting a priest upon his throne.' As regards redemption itself, we see him as 'the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;' and we hear him saying, 'Mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me.' It is as regards the application of redemption—the unfolding of the evidences of its truth, the communication of a knowledge of it to the understanding, the removing of dislike or indifference to it from the heart, and the bestowing of its rich and imperishable blessings on the soul, that we see the immediate working, and contemplate the personal glory of the ever-blessed Spirit.

The phrase, 'the Eternal Spirit,' is similar to the phrase 'the Spirit of holiness;' and the latter, as we showed in the Note on Christ's sonship, is used, in Rom. i. 4, to denote our Lord's deity. In two other passages which appear to speak strictly of the Saviour, 'the Spirit' seems to be mentioned antithetically to 'the flesh.' In both, 'the flesh' clearly designates his human nature; so, that, by the law of antithesis, 'the Spirit' necessarily designates his divine nature. 'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit,' 1 Pet. iii. 18. At the same time, while speaking of the personal acts of either the Son, the Spirit, or the Father, in the economy of redemption, we ought closely to bear in mind that God is one, and that the glory of Godhead is undivided.

## THE DECREES OF GOD.

QUESTION XII. *What are the decrees of God?*

ANSWER. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will; whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time; especially concerning angels and men.

QUESTION XIII. *What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men?*

ANSWER. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory, and, in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth, or withholdeth favour, as he pleaseth) hath passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

*General View of the Doctrine of the Divine Decrees.*

HAVING considered the perfections of the divine nature, and the personal glories of the Father, Son, and Spirit, the next thing to be insisted on is, what God has purposed to do from eternity, or does, or will do, in pursuance of his purposes. The former we call his decrees; the latter, the execution of them. The object of his decree is whatever comes to pass. This is the most large and comprehensive sense of his purpose. But as his determinations, in a particular manner, respect angels and men, or the intelligent part of the creation, and more especially the eternal happiness of some, or the display of his righteous judgments against others, they are taken in a more limited sense, and are called, as relating to the former, Election, and as relating to the latter, Reprobation. The decrees of God thus viewed are the subject of these two Answers. Before we proceed to insist on this sublime and difficult subject, it may not be inexpedient for us to premise some things concerning it in general.

1. It is well known that there is no doctrine, contained in scripture, which is more contested than this. It is by some not only denied but treated with the utmost dislike or detestation. Either we must wholly forbear to mention it in public discourses or writings, or we are liable to the hard fate of being censured as if we are maintaining a doctrine which is not only indefensible, but injurious to mankind, and subversive of all religion; while they who censure us take for granted the truth of what they affirm, and will not do the justice to the argument to consider what may be advanced in its defence.

2. If there be any who give just occasion to these prejudices, by the methods which they have used in explaining the doctrine, as well as by the weakness of their arguments in defending it, or by laying themselves open to those popular objections which are usually brought against it, we cannot but conclude that they are highly to blame. We are hence far from approving of any unguarded expressions, which are to be met with in some writings, whereby a stumbling-block is laid in the way of those who are disposed to make men offenders for a word, rather than to judge impartially of the main drift of their discourse. It is to be owned, that such expressions have done disservice to the cause; which might have been better defended.

3. If the prejudices against this doctrine are ill grounded, and the objections only founded on the popular cry by which it is endeavoured to be run down, and condemned with reproach and censure,—and if persons know not, nor desire to know, what may be said in defence of the doctrine, or how their objections may be answered, their disgust and opposition are both unreasonable and uncharitable, and imply a capricious resolution not to be undeceived, and consequently render the persons thus prejudiced, highly culpable in the sight of God,—especially if there be any ground to conclude that the divine glory is maintained in the doctrine.

4. Let it be farther considered, that the doctrine is not new, or such as was altogether unheard of in the world before; nor has it been only defended by the more ignorant or licentious part of mankind, or by those who have been bold and pre-



sumptuous in affirming that for truth which they had not duly weighed, or been convinced of, from the strongest evidence. Whether it be as ancient as scripture, and, indeed, founded upon it, we shall leave others to judge, when we have considered what may be said from it in its defence.

5. It was generally asserted, and publicly owned, in most of the confessions of Faith of the Reformed churches in the last age, and, in particular, in one of the Articles of the Church of England. And there is no apparent ambiguity in the words; however some have, by way of comment, endeavoured, of late, to strain the sense of them, and to put such a meaning on them as is very different from the writings of those who compiled them. We may add, that, however much the contrary doctrines are maintained at this day, it was maintained in their public discourses and writings, by far the greatest number of divines in the last century. We do not insist on this, however, as a proof of its truth, as though it needed to be supported by numbers of advocates, or were founded on their support. Nor do we suppose, that, when it has been most strenuously, and almost universally defended, there were not, at the same time, others who opposed it. I mention the fact of its general reception only that I may, if possible, remove those prejudices which are inconsistent with persons judging impartially of it.

Since we are considering the prejudices against this doctrine, we think it necessary to add, that we shall endeavour to vindicate it from the reproach which is generally cast on it, by those who suppose that it cannot be defended without asserting God to be the Author of sin, or supposing him to be severe, cruel, and unjust to his creatures, as some, by unjust consequences deduced from it, imagine us to maintain. We are far from asserting, as will hereafter appear, that God, from all eternity, purposed to damn a great part of the world, as the result of his mere sovereign will, without the foresight of sin, which would render them liable to condemnation. Moreover, we shall endeavour to make it appear, in opposition to the calumnies of some, that the decree of God does not destroy, or take away, the liberty of man's will, with respect to things within its own sphere; or that, considered in itself, it does not lay a natural necessity on man to rush into damnation, as though the destruction of sinners were only to be resolved into the divine purpose, and not their own wickedness. In considering this we shall maintain, that the decree of God does not lay any force on the will of man,—that it does not preclude the means of grace, as ordained by him, for the salvation of them that do or shall believe unto life everlasting,—and that it does not obstruct the preaching of the gospel, or the proclaiming of the glad tidings of salvation, to those who sit under the Christian ministry as an ordinance for their faith.—Many, again, are prejudiced against this doctrine, on account of the popular outcry, that it is of very pernicious tendency,—either, on the one hand, leading men to presumption, by giving them occasion to conclude, that if they are elected they may be saved, though they live as they please, or, on the other hand, leading them to despair, by suggesting that if there be such a decree as that of reprobation, they must necessarily be included in it,—and that, in consequence, it is a doctrine which, instead of promoting holiness of life, is inconsistent with it. Now, if we cannot maintain it without giving just ground for such exceptions, we shall not only think our labour lost, but shall, as much as they do, condemn it, as pernicious and unscriptural, as, if it cannot be defended from such exceptions, it must of necessity be. I hope, however, that we shall be able not only to defend it from every charge of pernicious tendency, but also to make it appear that it is consistent with practical godliness, and, at the same time, a very great motive and inducement to it. If this shall be proved, the greatest part of the censorious prejudices which are entertained against it will be removed, and persons will be better able to judge whether truth lies on that side of the question which we shall endeavour to defend, or the contrary.

I could not but premise these things in our entrance on this subject, for I am sensible that such reproaches as those we have mentioned, are brought by many, without duly weighing whether they are well grounded or not. The doctrine is often opposed in such a way of reasoning, that the premises, as well as the conclusions drawn from them, are rather their own than ours. Or if some ideas which they urge against it may be found in the writings, or taken from the unguarded expressions, of

some who have defended this doctrine, they have appeared in such a dress, that even they who are supposed to have advanced them, would have disowned and rejected them. If persons, who are in another way of thinking, resolve not to lay aside these misrepresentations, it plainly appears that they are not disposed to be open to conviction, and, in that case, all attempts to defend this doctrine will be to no purpose. The preventing of such a result has rendered these prefatory cautions needless.

We shall only add, to what has been said, some general rules, by which we desire that the truth, either of this or the opposite doctrine, may be judged of.

1. If we do not confirm what we assert, by proofs taken from scripture, let it not be received ; but if we do, whatever may be said of our method of managing the controversy, the greatest deference ought to be paid to the sacred oracles. It is very common for persons to answer the arguments taken from one scripture, by producing other scriptures which seem to assert the contrary ; as if they were desirous to shift sides in the dispute, and put us upon solving the difficulties which they suppose to be contained in the texts they quote. Now though this practice of theirs demands our attention, yet a more direct answer must be given before the doctrine is overthrown. Whether our explanation of those scriptures on which our faith in it is founded, be just, we shall leave others to judge ; and also whether the sense we give of other scriptures which are brought as objections against it, be not equally probable with that of those who bring them. This is all that need be insisted on in such cases.

2. Let that doctrine be received, and the contrary rejected, on which side of the question soever it lies, which is most agreeable to the divine perfections, and which explains the texts brought in defence of it, most consistently with them. This is a fair proposal, and such as ought not only to be applied to this particular doctrine, but to the whole of religion ; for all religion is founded on scripture, which so far from overthrowing the divine glory, has the advancement of it for its great end.

3. Let that doctrine be rejected, as inconsistent with itself, and not worthy to be believed or embraced, whether it be ours or the contrary, which shall detract from the harmony of the divine perfections, or pretend to set up, or plead for one, and, at the same time, militate against the glory of another. I desire nothing more than that our whole method of reasoning on this subject may be tried by these rules, and be deemed true or false, agreeably to what they contain.

In considering the doctrine of the Decrees of God, as stated in the two Answers which we are explaining, we shall proceed according to the following method. First, we shall show what we are to understand, by God's foreordaining whatever comes to pass, according to the counsel of his own will ; and here we shall compare the decree with the execution of it, and observe how one exactly answers to the other, and is to be a rule for our judging concerning it. Secondly, we shall prove the truth of that proposition, 'that God hath foreordained whatever shall come to pass, either in time, or to eternity.' Thirdly, we shall particularly consider intelligent creatures, angels and men, both good and bad, with respect to their present or future state, as the objects of God's eternal decree or purpose ; and so shall proceed to speak concerning the decree of election and reprobation, as stated in the latter of these Answers. Fourthly, we shall lay down some propositions concerning each class of decrees, tending to explain and prove them, more especially as to what respects the election and reprobation of men. Fifthly, we shall consider the properties of the decrees, and how the divine perfections are displayed in them, and endeavour to make it appear, in various instances, that the account we shall give of them is agreeable to the divine perfections as well as founded on scripture. Sixthly, we shall inquire whether the contrary doctrine, defended by those who deny election and reprobation, be not derogatory to, and subversive of, the divine perfections, or, at least, inconsistent with the harmony of them, or whether it does not, in many respects, make God altogether such a one as ourselves. Seventhly, we shall endeavour to prove that their reasoning from scripture, who maintain the contrary doctrine, is not sufficiently conclusive ; that the sense they give of the texts generally brought to support it, does not so well agree with the divine perfections as it ought to do ; and that these texts may be explained in a different way,



more consistent with the divine character. Eighthly, we shall endeavour to answer the most material objections which are usually brought against the doctrine that we are maintaining. And, Lastly, we shall show how this doctrine is practically to be improved by us, to the glory of God, and our spiritual good and advantage.

*The Meaning of Predestination.*

We shall, first, inquire what we are to understand by God's foreordaining whatever comes to pass, according to the counsel of his own will.

By God's foreordaining whatever comes to pass, we do not understand merely his foreknowledge of all things which are or shall be done in time, and to eternity. This indeed is included in, and inseparably connected with, his eternal purpose; for no one can purpose to do an act without having foreknowledge of that act. Yet more than this is certainly contained in the divine purpose. God's predetermining, or foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass, includes not only an act of the divine understanding, but an act of his sovereign will. It is not only his knowing what shall come to pass, but his determining by his own agency, or efficiency, what he will produce in time, or to eternity. Accordingly, some call the decrees of God his eternal providence, and the execution of them his actual providence. By the former, he determines what he will do; by the latter, he brings his determinations to pass, or effects what he before designed to do. It follows, that God's foreordaining whatsoever shall come to pass, is vastly different from his bringing things to pass. The one is an internal act of his will; the other, an external act of his almighty power. He foreordained that events should come to pass; and, till then, they are considered as future. This determination, however, necessarily secures the event; unless we suppose it possible for his eternal purpose to be defeated; and to suppose this, as will farther appear under some following particulars, is not accordant with the divine perfections. On the other hand, when we consider him as bringing all things to pass, or as producing them by his power, what was before future becomes present. With respect to the former, he decrees what shall be; and, with respect to the latter, his decree takes effect, and is executed accordingly.

They who treat of this matter, generally consider things either as possible or as future. Things are said to be possible, with respect to the power of God; as every thing that he can do is possible to be done, though some things, which he could have done, he will never do. For instance, he could have made more worlds, had he pleased; or have produced more men upon earth, or more species of creatures; or have given a greater degree of perfection to creatures than he has done, or will do; for it is certain, that he never acted to the utmost of his power. Accordingly, he could have done many things which he will never do; and those things are said to be possible, but not future. Moreover, things future are rendered so by the will of God, or by his having foreordained or determined to produce them. This is what we call the decree of God; which respects the event, or determines whatever shall come to pass.

We are now to consider what we are to understand by God's foreordaining all things, according to the counsel of his will. This is a mode of speaking used in scripture, 'Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.'<sup>a</sup> We are not hereby to understand that the decrees of God are the result of deliberation, or his debating matters within himself, as reasoning in his own mind about the expediency or in expediency of things, or calling in the advice of others, as creatures are said to do, when acting with counsel. He must not be supposed to determine things in such a way; for that would argue an imperfection in the divine mind. 'With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?'<sup>b</sup> But God's foreordaining all things according to the counsel of his will, implies that his decrees are infinitely wise. What is done with counsel is said, according to human modes of speaking, to be done advisedly, in opposition to its being done rashly, or with pre-

a Eph. i. 11.

b Isa. xl. 14.

icipation. Now, all the works of God are done with wisdom; and hence, all his purposes and determinations to do what is done in time are infinitely wise. This, according to our way of speaking, is called the counsel of his will. Thus it is said, 'He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.'<sup>e</sup>

We are now to consider the object of God's decree. This, as has been before observed, is every thing that has come, or shall come to pass; and it may be considered in different respects. There are some things which he has determined to effect. Such are the objects of his power, or all things which have a natural or moral goodness in them, and which are becoming an infinitely holy God to produce. These include every thing but sin. This God does not produce, it not being the object of power. Yet it must be supposed to be committed by his permission; and therefore it is the consequence of his decree to permit, though not, as other things, of his decree to effect. It is one thing to suffer sin to be committed in the world, and another thing to be the author of it. But this subject we shall have occasion to enlarge on, under a following particular.

### *The Truth of Predestination.*

We shall now proceed to prove the truth of what is laid down in this answer, namely, that God hath foreordained whatever comes to pass. This will evidently appear, if we consider the four following propositions in their due connection.

1. Nothing comes to pass by chance, with respect to God; but every thing takes place by the direction of his providence. This we are bound to assert against the Deists, who speak of God as though he were not the Governor of the world. Our proposition cannot be denied by any who think, with any degree of modesty, concerning the divine perfections, or pay a due deference to them; for God may as well be denied to be the Creator as the Governor of the world.

2. It follows that nothing is done without the divine influence, or permission. The former, as was before observed, respects things which are good, and are the effects of his power; the latter respects sin. That nothing comes to pass without the divine influence, or permission, is evident; for if any thing came to pass, which is the object of power, without the divine influence, then the creature would be said to exist, or act, independently of the power of God. If so, it would follow, that the creature would exist or act necessarily; but necessary existence is a perfection appropriate to God. As to sin being committed by divine permission, it is evident, that if it might be committed without the divine permission, it could not be restrained by God. And to suppose that he could not hinder the commission of sin, is to suppose that sin might proceed to the greatest height, without any possible check or control. This would argue a great defect in the divine government of the world; and it is also contrary to daily experience, as well as to scripture. Certainly he who sets bounds to the sea, and says to its proud waves, 'Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther,' must be supposed to set bounds to the corrupt passions of wicked men. Accordingly, the psalmist says, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.'<sup>d</sup> Yet this does not argue his approbation of sin, or that he is the author of it; for it is one thing to suffer, or not to hinder, and another thing to be the author of any thing. Hence, it is said, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence';<sup>e</sup> that is, 'I did not restrain thee from doing them, as I could have done.' Again, it is said that, 'in times past, he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.'<sup>f</sup>

3. God never acts, or suffers any thing to be done, but he knows beforehand what he will do or suffer. This an intelligent creature, acting as such, is said to do. It must not, therefore, be denied of Him who is omniscient and infinitely wise. He who knows all things which others will do, cannot but know, before it is acted, what he himself will do, or what others will do, by the interposition of his providence, or what he will suffer to be done.

4. Whatever God does, and knows beforehand that he will do, he must be supposed to have before determined to do. To deny this would argue him to be de-



fective in wisdom. No wise man acts precipitantly, or without judgment; much less must the wise God be supposed to do so, concerning whom it is said, that 'all his ways are judgment.'<sup>g</sup>

It appears, therefore, even to a demonstration, that God before determined, or foreordained, whatever comes to pass. This was the thing to be proved. And as he never began to determine, as he never began to exist, or as he never was without resolution what he would do, it is evident, that he foreordained, from eternity, whatever should come to pass, either in time, or to eternity.

Farther, if God did not foreordain whatsoever comes to pass, he did not determine to create all things before he gave being to them; and then it could not be said, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.'<sup>h</sup> There are, indeed, many admirable discoveries of wisdom, as well as power, in the effects produced. But to suppose that all these were produced without forethought, or that there was no eternal purpose relating to them, would be such a reflection on the glory of this perfection, as is inconsistent with the idea of a God. Moreover, every intelligent being designs some end by his works, and the highest and most excellent end must be designed by a God of infinite wisdom; and if, in subserviency to such an end, he does all things for his own glory, it must be allowed that they are the result of an eternal purpose. All this, I am persuaded, will not be denied by those on the other side of the question, who defend their own cause with any measure of judgment.

Again, to deny that God foreordained whatever comes to pass, is in effect to deny a providence, or, at least, that God governs the world in such a way that what he does was preconceived. In stating this, we expect to meet with no opposition from any but Deists, or those who deny a God. And if it be taken for granted that there is a providence, or that God is the Governor of the world, we cannot but conclude that all the displays of his glory in that character are the result of his eternal purpose. Accordingly, it is said that 'he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.'<sup>i</sup> The meaning of this is not merely—though that is an important truth—that he acts without control, inasmuch as his power is infinite, but that all he does is pursuant to his will. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. The divine power and will are so inseparably connected, that he cannot be said to produce anything but by the word of his power; and when he willeth that any thing should come to pass, his will is not, as ours is, inefficacious, for want of power to effect what we would have done. Hence, for God to will the present existence of things, is to effect it. This seems to be the reason of that mode of speaking which was used when he produced all things at first: he said, 'Let them exist in that form, or perfection, which he had before designed to give them;' and immediately the effect followed.<sup>k</sup>

Hitherto, I presume, our argument will not be much contested. The main thing in the controversy is what relates to the divine determination respecting intelligent creatures; which will be considered in a following Section. What I have hitherto attempted to prove, is the general proposition, that whatever God brings to pass, or is the effect of power, is the result of his determinate purpose. In what I have said I have, I think, carefully distinguished between God's will to effect, and his will to permit. That distinction, however, will be farther explained when, under the head of Election, we speak of the decrees of God, with a particular application to angels and men.

### *The Design and Nature of the Divine Decrees.*

Having endeavoured to prove that God hath foreordained whatever comes to pass, we shall lay down the following propositions relating to his end and design in all his purposes, together with the nature of things, as coming to pass pursuant to them, and the method in which we are to conceive of the decree, when compared with its execution.

1. God cannot design any thing, in his eternal purpose, as the highest end, but his own glory. This is here assigned as the end of his decrees. As the glory of God is the principal motive, or reason, inducing him to produce whatever comes to pass; so it must be considered as the end of his purpose relating to it. As the divine glory is the most excellent of all things, he cannot, as an infinitely wise God, design any thing short of it, as the great motive or inducement for him to act. Whatever lower ends are designed by him, are all resolved into this as the principal. But while God designs his own glory as the highest end, he, at the same time, has purposed not only that this should be brought about by means conducive to it, but that there should be a subserviency of one thing to another. These points, as well as the highest end, his own glory, are the objects of his decree. He determines, for example, that the life and health of man shall be maintained by the use of proper means and medicine, or that grace shall be wrought instrumentally by those means which he has ordained in order to it. Thus his purpose respects the end and means, together with the connection that there is between them.

2. According to the natural order of things, the divine purpose is antecedent to its execution. It seems very absurd to distinguish the decree of God, as some do, into antecedent and consequent, one going before the use of means, the other following. Of this we shall say more hereafter. It is certain, that every intelligent being first determines to act, and then executes his determinations; so that nothing can be more absurd than to say, that a person determines to do a thing which is already done. We conclude, therefore, that God first decreed what shall come to pass, and then brings it to pass. Accordingly he first determined to create the world, and then created it. He first determined to bestow the means of grace on men, and to render them effectual to the salvation of all who shall be saved; and then he acts accordingly. So, with respect to his judicial actings, he first determined, by a permissive decree, not to prevent the commission of sin, though infinitely opposed to his holiness, and then, knowing the consequence of this permissive decree, or that men, through the mutability or corruption of their nature, would rebel against him, he determined to punish sin after it should be committed. Thus the decree of God is, in all respects, antecedent to the execution of it; or his eternal providence, as his decrees are sometimes called, is antecedent to, and the ground and reason of, his actual providence.

3. Though the purpose of God precedes its execution, yet the execution of it is first known by us. It is by this that we are to judge of his decree or purpose; which is altogether secret, with respect to us, till he reveals it. We first observe the discoveries of any matter, as contained in his word, or made visible in his actual providence; and thence we infer his eternal purpose relating to it. Every thing which is first in the order of nature, is not first with respect to the order of our knowing it. Thus the cause is before the effect; but the effect is often known before the cause. The sun is, in the order of nature, before the enlightening of the world by it; but we first see the light, and then we know there is a sun, which is the fountain of it. Or, to take another and closer illustration, a legislator determines to make a law; his determination is antecedent to the making, and the making to the promulgation of it; and, by the promulgation, his subjects come to the knowledge of it, and act in conformity to it. According to our method of judging concerning it, we must first know that there is a law; and thence we conclude that there was, in him who gave it, a purpose relating to it. Thus we conclude that, though the decree of God be the ground and reason of the execution of it, we know that there was such a decree by its execution, or, at least, by some way designed to discover it to us.

These things being duly considered, may obviate an objection which is brought against the doctrine we are maintaining. It is merely a misrepresentation, and considers us as asserting, 'that our conduct of life, and the judgment we are to pass concerning ourselves relating to our hope of future blessedness, are to be principally, if not altogether, regulated by God's secret purpose or decree; so that we are first to consider him as determining the event, that is, as having chosen or rejected us, and hence to encourage ourselves to attend upon the means of grace, or to take occasion to neglect them; it being a preposterous thing for a man who



considers himself as reprobated, to attend on any of those means which are ordained for salvation.' What has been already said is sufficient to take away the force of this objection. It will be particularly considered also, when we come to answer several objections against the doctrine of election. All I shall say at present is, that as our conduct and hope are to be governed by the appearances of things, and not by God's secret purpose relating to the event, we are to act as those who have not, and cannot have, any knowledge of what is decreed, till it is evinced by execution, or, at least, by the bestowal of those graces which are wrought in us. These are the objects of God's purpose, as well as our future blessedness; and our right to the latter is to be judged of by the former.

This leads us to consider the properties of the decrees of God, as mentioned in the former of the answers we are now considering. It is there said, 'they are wise, free, and holy.' This is very evident from the wisdom, sovereignty, and holiness, which appear in the execution of them; for whatever perfections are demonstrated in the dispensations of providence or grace, these God designed to glorify in his eternal purpose. If his works in time are wise, free, sovereign, and holy, his decree with respect to them must be said to be so likewise. These things we shall have occasion to treat more particularly under a following head, when we consider the properties of election, and particularly that it is wise, sovereign, and holy. I shall at present only say, that whatever perfections belong to the nature of God, are demonstrated by his works. He cannot act unbecoming himself; for to suppose that he can, would give occasion to the world to deny him to be infinitely perfect, that is, to be God. If we pass a judgment on creatures by what they do, and determine him to be a wise man, who acts wisely, or a holy man, who acts holily, or a free and sovereign agent, who acts without constraint, certainly the same principle holds in our speaking of the divine Majesty. Hence, as whatever he does has the marks of infinite wisdom, holiness, and sovereignty, impressed upon it, it is evident that these properties or perfections belong to all his purposes. If, as the psalmist observes, all 'his works' are performed 'in wisdom,' we have reason, as the apostle does, to admire that wisdom as appearing from them to be contained in all his purposes relating to them: 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!'<sup>m</sup> If he is 'righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,'<sup>n</sup> and therein demonstrates a divine sovereignty, as acting without any obligation or constraint laid upon him to bestow the favours he confers on mankind, we must certainly conclude that his eternal purpose, which is executed in these works and gifts, is free and sovereign.

### *The meaning of Election.*

Intelligent creatures, such as angels and men, with respect to their present or future state, are the objects of God's eternal decree, or purpose, generally called 'predestination.' This, as it relates to the happiness of some, and the misery of others, is distinguished into election or reprobation. It is a very awful subject, and ought never to be thought of, or mentioned, but with the utmost caution and reverence, lest we speak those things that are not right concerning God, and thereby dishonour him, or give just occasion to any to deny or reproach this doctrine, as though it were not founded on scripture.

Hitherto we have considered the purpose of God, as including all things future as its objects. We are now to speak of it, as it relates, in particular, to angels and men. When we confine the objects of God's purpose to those things which have no dependence on the free will of angels or men, we do not meet with much opposition from those who in other respects support the contrary scheme of doctrine. Most of them, who are masters of their own argument and consider what may be allowed without weakening their cause, do not deny that God fore-ordained whatever comes to pass, and that he did this from all eternity, if we except what respects the actions of free agents. They will grant, for example, that

God, from all eternity, determined to create the world, and then to govern it, and to give laws to men, as the rule of government, and a free will or power to yield obedience. But when we consider men's free actions as the objects of a divine decree, and the final state of men as being determined by it, we are met by the greatest opposition. We hence must endeavour to maintain our ground in the following part of this argument.

The decree of God, respecting intelligent creatures, is to be considered as consisting of two branches, Election and Reprobation. The former is stated in these words: 'God, out of his mere love for the praise of his glorious grace, hath elected some to glory in Christ, and also to the means thereof.' Reprobation is thus stated: 'According to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, he hath passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be, for their sin, inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.' Both these doctrines are to be considered; but in the present section we shall inquire only respecting the doctrine of election.

To elect, or choose, according to the common use or acceptation of the word, signifies the taking a small number out of a greater, or a part out of the whole. This is applied either to things or to persons. It is applied to things; as when a person has a great many things to choose out of, he sets aside some of them for his own use, and rejects the others, as refuse, which he will have nothing to do with. It is applied to persons; as when a king chooses, out of his subjects, some whom he will advance to great honours; or when a master chooses, out of a number of servants offered to him, one or more, whom he will employ in his service. The act, from the nature of the case, implies, that all are not chosen, but only a part; and that there is a discrimination, or a difference put between one and another. But we are more particularly to consider the meaning of the word 'election,' as we find it in scripture; and there it is used in several senses.

To elect, or choose, according to the mere acceptation of the word, does not intimate the particular thing which a person is chosen to. That is to be understood by what is added to determine the sense of the election. Sometimes we read of persons being chosen to partake of some privileges, short of salvation; at other times, of their being chosen to salvation. Sometimes election is to be understood as signifying their being chosen to things of a lower nature; at other times, their being chosen to perform those duties, and exercise those graces, which accompany salvation. We may, however, very easily understand the sense of it by the context. Again, it is sometimes taken for the execution of God's purpose, or for his actual providence making choice of persons to fulfil his pleasure, in their various capacities. At other times, as we are in this argument to understand it, it is taken for his fixing his love upon his people, and purposing to bring them to glory,—making choice of some out of the rest of mankind as the monuments of his discriminating grace. We have instances of all these senses of the word in scripture.

1. It is sometimes taken for God's actual separation of persons for some peculiar instances of service; which is a branch of his providential dispensation in time. Thus we sometimes read, in scripture, of persons being chosen, or set apart, by God to an office, and that either civil or sacred. On occasion of Saul's being made king, by God's special appointment, Samuel says, 'See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen?'<sup>o</sup> So it is said elsewhere, 'He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfold; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.'<sup>p</sup> It also signifies his actual appointment of some persons to perform some sacred office. Thus it is said, concerning the Levites, that 'the Lord had chosen them to carry the ark, and to minister unto him.'<sup>q</sup> And our Saviour says to his disciples, 'Have not I chosen you,' namely, to be my disciples, and as such to be employed in preaching the gospel, 'and one of you is a devil?'<sup>r</sup>

2. It is sometimes taken for God's providential designation of a people, to be made partakers of the external privileges of the covenant of grace belonging to them as a



church; which, as thus designated, is the peculiar object of the divine regard. Thus the people of Israel are said to have been chosen, or separated, from the world, to enjoy the external blessings of the covenant of grace. Moses says to them, 'Because the Lord loved your fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them;' <sup>s</sup> and 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.' <sup>t</sup> In many other places in the Old Testament, the word 'election' is taken in this sense; though, as we shall endeavour to show in a following section, something more than this seems to be included in some particular scriptures in the prophetic writings, in which the Jews are described as God's 'chosen people.'

3. It also signifies God's bestowing special grace on some who are highly favoured by him above others, calling them, or setting them apart for himself, to have communion with him, to bear a testimony to him, and to be employed in eminent service, for his name and glory in the world. It seems to be thus understood in 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, where the apostle speaks of their 'calling.' This imports some special privileges which they were made partakers of, as the objects of divine power and grace, to whom Christ was 'made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' It is, as appears by the foregoing and following verses, <sup>u</sup> the powerful, internal, effectual call, and not merely the external call, of the gospel. And they whose calling he speaks of, are said to be chosen. 'You see your calling, how that not many wise men, &c. are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world,' &c. So that to be chosen, and to be effectually called, seem, in this passage, to import the same thing.

4. Sometimes also it is taken for some peculiar excellency which one Christian has above another. That hospitable or public-spirited person, for example, to whom the apostle John directs his second epistle, is called by him, 'The elect lady.' <sup>x</sup> An excellent person, in the same way, is sometimes styled a choice person.

But, though the word 'election' is taken, in scripture, in these various senses, it is not confined to any or all of them. We shall endeavour to make it appear, that it is often taken, in scripture, in the sense in which it is understood in this answer,—that it is taken for God's having foreordained particular persons, as monuments of his special love, to be made partakers of grace here, and glory hereafter,—or as the Answer expresses it, for being 'chosen to eternal life, and the means thereof.' In endeavouring to prove this, we shall consider the objects of election, namely, angels and men; that it is only a part of mankind who are chosen to salvation, namely, that remnant which shall be eventually saved; that these are chosen to the means of salvation, as well as the end; and how their election is said to be in Christ.

The objects of election are angels and men. A few words may be said concerning the election of angels; as it is particularly mentioned in this answer. We have not, indeed, much delivered concerning this matter in scripture; though the apostle calls those who remain in their state of holiness and happiness, in which they were created, 'elect angels.' <sup>y</sup> But, had we no mention of their election in scripture, their being confirmed in their present state of blessedness, must, from the reasoning which we have already stated, be supposed to be the result of a divine purpose, or the execution of a decree relating to it. There is a difference, indeed, between their election, and that of men. The latter are chosen unto salvation; while the angels are not subjects capable of it, inasmuch as they were never in a lost, undone state. Men, again, are said to be chosen in Christ, but the angels are not.

We shall proceed, however, to that which more immediately concerns us, to consider men as the objects of election. Their election is variously expressed in scripture. Sometimes it is called their being 'appointed to obtain salvation,' or being 'ordained to eternal life,' or their 'names being written in the book of life.' It is also called, 'the purpose of God, according to election,' or his having 'loved them before the foundation of the world,' or his having 'predestinated them unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will.' That the

<sup>s</sup> Deut. iv. 37.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. vii. 6, 7.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23, compared with ver. 30.

<sup>x</sup> 2 John 1.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Tim. v. 21.

scriptures speak of persons as elect, and that their election is always represented as a great instance of divine favour and goodness, is not denied. The main thing in question is, whether this relates to the purpose of God, or to his providence; whether it respects particular persons, or the church of God, in general, as distinguished from the world; and, if it be supposed to relate to particular persons, how these are considered in God's purpose, or what is the order and reason of his determination to save them.

That election sometimes respects the disposing providence of God, in time, has been already considered; and some particular instances of it, noticed in scripture, have been referred to. But when they on the other side of the question maintain, that this is the only or principal sense in which election is spoken of in scripture, we must take leave to differ from them. There is a late writer<sup>z</sup> who sometimes misrepresents, and, at other times, opposes this doctrine, with more assurance and insult than the strength of his reasoning will well allow. His performance on this subject and on others which have some affinity with it, is concluded, by many of his admirers, to be unanswerable. The sense which he has, in that work, given of several scriptures—as well as in his ‘Paraphrase on the New Testament,’ in which he studiously endeavours to explain every text in conformity to his own scheme—has tended to prejudice many in favour of his views. We shall, therefore, sometimes take occasion to consider what he advances against the doctrine which we are maintaining. As to election in particular, he supposes, “1. That the election, mentioned in scripture, is not of particular persons, but only that of churches and nations, or their being chosen to the enjoyment of the means of grace, rather than a certainty of their being saved by those means; that it does not contain any absolute assurance of their salvation, or of any such grace as shall infallibly, and without any possibility of frustration, procure their salvation. 2. That the election to salvation, mentioned in scripture, is only conditional upon our perseverance in a life of holiness.”<sup>a</sup> He attempts to prove, also that “election, in the Old Testament, belongs not to righteous and obedient persons only, but the whole nation of the Jews, good and bad; and that, in the New Testament, it is applied to those who embrace the Christian faith, without any regard had to their eternal happiness.”

These things ought to be particularly considered. We shall endeavour to prove that though ‘election’ often, in the Old Testament, respects the church of the Jews, as enjoying the external means of grace, yet it does not sufficiently appear that it is never to be taken in any other sense,—especially when there are some of those privileges which accompany salvation mentioned in the context, and applied to some of those who are described as elected,—or when there are some promises made to them, which respect more than the external means of grace. If there were but one scripture which is to be taken in this sense, it would be a sufficient answer to the assertion, that the Old Testament never intends by the word election any privilege but such as is external, and has no immediate reference to salvation. Here I might refer to some places in the evangelical prophecy of Isaiah, which are not foreign to our purpose. It is said, for example, ‘Thou Israel art my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen; and I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.’<sup>b</sup> That this respects more than the continuance of their political and religious state, as enjoying the external means of grace, seems to be implied in those promises which are made to them, in the words immediately following, which not only speak of their deliverance from captivity, after they had continued some time in it, but of their being made partakers of God's special love, which had an immediate reference to their salvation. Thus it is said, ‘Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.’ And elsewhere God, speaking to the Jews, says, ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins;’<sup>c</sup> and, ‘Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded

<sup>z</sup> Dr. Whitty, in his *Discourse of Election*, &c. pages 36, 37, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. xli. 8, 9.

<sup>a</sup> See his *Discourse concerning Election*, c Chap. xliii. 25.



world without end.<sup>d</sup> There are also many other promises which seem to import much more than the external privileges of the covenant of grace. These many very excellent Christians have applied to themselves, supposing them to refer to those blessings which have a more immediate connexion with salvation. It would detract very much from the spirituality and usefulness of such scriptures, to say that they have no relation to us, on account of our having nothing to do with the Jewish nation, to whom the promises contained in them were made.

It may be objected, that these promises are directed to the church of the Jews, as a chosen people; and that to suppose that there were a number elected out of them to eternal salvation, is to extend the sense of the word beyond the design of the context, to destroy the determinate sense of it, and to suppose an election out of an election. But since the word 'election' denotes persons being chosen to enjoy the external means of grace, and to attain salvation by and under them, it may, without any impropriety of expression, be used in these different senses in the same text. Israel may be described as a chosen people in the former sense; and yet there might be a number elected out of them, who were chosen to eternal life, to whom the promise of salvation more especially belonged, and who are distinguished from the general body of the Jewish nation, called, in the other sense, 'God's elect.' It is said, for example, 'I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord; the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies,'<sup>e</sup> &c. Now, as Israel were an elect people, chosen out of the world to enjoy the external privileges conferred upon them as a church, and as they misimproved these, and, in consequence, were carried captive into Babylon, there was a remnant chosen out of them to be made partakers of the blessings which accompany salvation, such as are here promised. This remnant are not considered as a church governed by laws distinct from those which Israel was governed by, and therefore not as a church selected out of that church; but as a number of people among them whom God had kept faithful, and whom he had chosen to enjoy better privileges than those which belonged to them as a professing people; or as a number elected to be made partakers of special grace, from among those who had been made partakers of common grace, and who had miserably abused it, and incurred due punishment.

Our Saviour, speaking concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army, and a great time of distress which should ensue, tells his disciples, that 'those days should be shortened for the elect's sake.' Here 'the elect' are those who were chosen to eternal life, and accordingly should be converted to the Christian faith, not from among the heathen, but out of the Jewish nation. It is to the Jews that he more particularly directs his discourse, forewarning them of this desolating judgment. And he advises them to pray that their 'flight be not on the Sabbath-day;'<sup>f</sup> intimating that that nation deemed it unlawful to defend themselves from the assaults of an enemy on the Sabbath-day, even though their immediate death should be the consequence. His advice was suited to the temper of the Jews, and to none else. No people in the world, except them, entertained this superstitious opinion concerning the prohibition of self-defence on the Sabbath-day. Our Saviour, therefore, speaks of them in particular, and not of the Christians who were amongst them. On this account, it seems probable that, by 'the elect,' is meant that small number of the Jews for whose sake those days of distress and tribulation were to be shortened.<sup>h</sup> There was, therefore, an elect people, whom God had a peculiar regard to, who should afterwards be converted to Christianity, — a number elected to eternal life from among that people who were elected to the external privileges of the covenant of grace. This further appears from what our Saviour says concerning 'false Christs, and false prophets, that should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.'<sup>i</sup> It cannot be supposed respecting those, who are called 'false Christs,' that they would attempt to pervert the Christians, by pretending to be the Messiah. That would have been impracticable, inasmuch as the Christians did not expect any other to come in that character. The Jews, on the contrary, did still expect a

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xlv. 17.

<sup>e</sup> Zeph. iii. 12, 13.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxiv. 22.

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 20.

<sup>h</sup> See the contrary opinion defended by Whitby in loc.

<sup>i</sup> Matt. xxiv. 24.

Messiah; and many of them were, in consequence, perverted to their own ruin. But it is intimated here, that the elect people, who were among them, should be kept from being deceived by them; inasmuch as they were chosen to obtain salvation, and therefore should believe in Christ by the gospel.

There is another scripture, which seems to give countenance to our opinion. It is that in which the apostle shows, that 'God had not cast away his people,'<sup>k</sup> namely, the Jews; that is, he had not rejected the whole nation, but had made a reserve of some, who were the objects of his special love, and chosen to salvation. These are called, 'A remnant according to the election of grace.'<sup>l</sup> This seems still more plain from what follows,<sup>m</sup> 'What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for,' that is, righteousness and life, which, as is stated in the preceding verse, they 'sought after, as it were, by the works of the law,' and so acted inconsistently with the attaining of it by grace, 'but the election,' that is, the elect among that people, 'have obtained it,' for they sought after it another way, 'and the rest were blinded,' that is, the other part of the Jewish nation who were not interested in the privilege of election, were left to the blindness of their own minds, and came to ruin.

Let me add one scripture more, that in which the apostle, speaking concerning the nation of the Jews, distinguishes between the natural and the spiritual seed of Abraham, and says, 'All are not Israel that are of Israel.'<sup>n</sup> This is as if he had said, 'There was a remnant according to the election of grace, who were chosen to eternal life from among that people who were, in other respects, chosen to be made partakers of the external privileges which belonged to them as God's peculiar people.'

The sum of the argument I have stated is, that though there are some scriptures which speak of the church of the Jews, as separated from the world by the peculiar hand of divine providence, and favoured with the external means of grace, yet there are others in which they are said to be chosen to partake of privileges of a higher nature, even those which accompany salvation; and that therefore 'election,' in the Old Testament, sometimes signifies God's purpose relating to the salvation of his people.

We shall proceed to consider how election is taken in the New Testament. Those whom we oppose allege that it is there used only to signify God's bringing persons to be members of the Christian church, as being instructed in Christian doctrines by the apostles.<sup>o</sup> The principal ground of this opinion is, that sometimes whole churches are said to be elected. The apostle, for example, speaks of the church at Babylon, as 'elected together with' those to whom he directs his epistle;<sup>p</sup> and it is supposed that nothing is intended, but that they were both of them Christian churches. If this be the sense of every scripture in the New Testament which treats of election, we must not pretend that the doctrine we are maintaining is founded on it. We think we have reason to conclude, however, that when we meet with the word in the New Testament, it is to be understood, in most places, for God's eternal purpose relating to the salvation of his people. I will not pretend to prove an universal negative, namely, that it is never taken otherwise; but shall refer to some scriptures, in which it is plainly understood in the sense I have stated, and shall endeavour to defend this sense.

The first scripture that we shall refer to, is Eph. i. 4, 'He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' In the following verse he speaks of their being 'predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.' Now, that this respects not the external dispensation of God's providence, in constituting them a Christian church, or giving them the knowledge of those doctrines on which the church was founded, but their being chosen to salvation, and to grace as the means of salvation, according to God's eternal purpose, will very evidently appear from the context. They who are chosen, are called 'faithful in Christ Jesus.' This language implies much more than merely to be in him by external profession. They are farther described,

<sup>k</sup> Rom. xi. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Ver. 5.

<sup>m</sup> Ver. 7.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. ix. 6, 7.

<sup>o</sup> See Whitby's Discourse, &c. page 40, et seq.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. i. 2. compared with chap. v. 13.



as 'blessed with all spiritual blessings, in Christ,'<sup>q</sup> or blessed with all those blessings which respect heavenly things, grace which they had in possession, and glory, which they had in expectation. They are still farther described, as having 'obtained redemption through the blood of Christ, and forgiveness of sins.' And all this is said to be done, 'according to the riches of his grace,' and 'the good pleasure of his will, who worketh all things after the counsel thereof.' Certainly all this must contain much more than the external dispensation of providence, relating to the privilege which they enjoyed as a church of Christ.

Again, in 1 Thess. i. 4, the apostle says concerning those to whom he writes, that he knew 'their election of God.' That this is to be understood of their election to eternal life, is very evident. Indeed, he explains it in this sense, when he says, 'God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>r</sup> The gospel is considered as the means of their attaining that salvation to which they are said to be chosen; so that their election contains more than their professed subjection to it, as a church of Christ. Besides, the apostle gives marks and evidences which plainly discover that it is their election to salvation which he intends. He speaks of their 'work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ,' and of 'the gospel's coming not in word only, but in power.'<sup>s</sup> Here he does not mean the power which was exerted in working miracles, for that would be no evidence of their being a church, or of their adhering to the doctrines which the miracles confirmed thereby, since every one who saw miracles wrought did not believe. What he means is, that, by the powerful internal influence of the Holy Ghost, they were persuaded to become followers of the apostles and the Lord, and were ensamples to others, and public-spirited, in endeavouring to propagate the gospel in the world. Certainly this argues that they were effectually called by the grace of God; and so proves that they were chosen to be made partakers of this grace, and of that salvation which is the consequence of it.

There is another scripture, in which it is very plain that the apostle speaks of election to eternal life; inasmuch as it affirms several privileges connected with election which the Christian church, as such, cannot lay claim to. The passage is Rom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.' Now if justification, or freedom from condemnation, accompanied with their being effectually called here, and ending in their being glorified hereafter, be the result of their election,<sup>t</sup> certainly more is included than the external privileges of the covenant of grace, which all who adhere to the Christian faith are possessed of. It is, therefore, an election to salvation which the apostle here intends.

It is objected, that it is more than probable, when we find, as we sometimes do, whole churches styled elect in the New Testament, that some among them were hypocrites. Those, in particular, to whom the apostle Peter writes, who were converted from Judaism to Christianity, whom he calls 'elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,' seem to have had some in communion with them, concerning whom it might be said, that they had only a name to live, but yet were dead. He advises them, 'to lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envies, and evil-speaking, and, as new born babes, to receive the word, if so be they had tasted that the Lord is gracious.'<sup>u</sup> This language makes it more than probable, that there were some among them who had not, in reality, experienced the grace of God. Again, when he says that there should be 'false teachers among them,' whose practice should be as vile as their doctrine, and that 'many' amongst them 'should follow their pernicious ways,'<sup>x</sup> his words seem to argue that the whole church he writes to were not chosen to salvation. It is hence inferred that their election signifies only their being chosen to enjoy the privileges which they possessed as a professing society of Christians.—It is certain, however, that there was a very considerable number among them who were not only Christians in name, but were very eminent for the exercise of those graces which evinced their election to eter-

q Eph. i. 3.

t Rom. viii. 30.

r 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

u 1 Pet. ii. 1.

s 1 Thess. i. 3, 5.

x 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

nal life. Peter says particularly concerning them, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; and in whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.'<sup>y</sup> This account of them agrees very well with their being 'elect, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.'<sup>z</sup> The only thing which seems to affect our argument is, that this character did not belong to every individual. But, supposing this should be allowed, might not the church be here described as chosen to salvation, inasmuch as the far greater number of them were so? Nothing is more common, in scripture, than for a whole body of men to be denominated from the greater part of them, whether their character be good or bad. Thus when the greater part of the Jewish church had revolted from God, and were guilty of the most notorious crimes, they are described as though their apostacy had been universal: 'They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders.'<sup>a</sup> Yet it is certain, that there were some who had not apostatized. Some were slandered and reproached for the sake of God; and, though their number was very small, they were not included in the number of those who walked with slanders. Again, God says by the prophet Ezekiel, 'I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.'<sup>b</sup> Yet, at that time, in which the people were most degenerate, there were found some who 'sighed and cried for all the abominations that were done in the midst of them.'<sup>c</sup> On the other hand, when the greater number of them kept their integrity, and walked before God in holiness of life, the whole church is thus characterized, 'I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness; Israel was holiness to the Lord.'<sup>d</sup> Yet it is certain, that, at that time, there were a great many who rebelled, murmured, and revolted from God, and were plagued for their iniquities. But because the greater number of them were upright and sincere, the character of being so is given in general terms, as if there had been no exception. The prophet looked back also to some age of the church, in which a great number of them were faithful; and he speaks of the people in general, at that time, as such, and accordingly calls them, 'The faithful city.'<sup>e</sup> The prophet Jeremiah, in the same manner, calls them, 'The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold.'<sup>f</sup> Yet there never was a time when there were none among them who rebelled against God. May not, then, the same principle be assumed concerning the first gospel-churches that were planted by the apostles? Accordingly, when those are styled 'elect' to whom the apostle Peter writes,<sup>g</sup> as well as the church at Babylon, why may not the word be supposed to signify, that the greater part of them were really sanctified, and therefore chosen to sanctification? It follows that their character, as elect, does not signify their being chosen merely to be made partakers of the external privileges of the gospel. We might consider also that it is very agreeable to our common mode of speaking, to denominate a city, or a kingdom, from the greater number. Whether we call them a rich, or a wise, or a valiant people, we never suppose that there are no exceptions to the character. Why, then, may we not conclude, that the apostle Peter, when he describes the church to whom he wrote as elected, intends their election to salvation?

We have thus endeavoured to prove, that election is not always taken, in the Old Testament, for the external privileges which the Jewish nation had as a church; nor, in the New Testament, for those which belong to the churches, or to persons who professed the Christian faith. Probably the learned author, before-mentioned, was apprehensive that his observation, as to this view of it, would not hold universally true. He has therefore another provisional objection against the doctrine of particular election of persons to eternal life, and says, as Arminius and his contemporaries before did, that all those scriptures which speak of this doctrine, refer to nothing more than God's conditional purpose, that if a person believes, he shall be saved. It is necessary for us to consider what may be said in answer to this; but as we shall have occasion to speak on this subject when we con-

y 1 Pet. i. 8, 9.  
d Jer. ii. 2, 3.

z Ver. 2.  
e Isa. i. 21.

a Jer. vi. 28.  
f Lam. iv. 2.

b Ezek. xxii. 30.  
g 1 Pet. v. 13.

c Chap. ix. 4.



sider the properties of election, under a following Head, we choose rather to reserve it to that place, than be obliged to repeat what might be said concerning it.

*Opinions as to the Objects of Election.*

Having thus premised something concerning election in general, and the sense in which it is to be understood in scripture, we shall briefly mention a matter in dispute, among divines, relating to the objects of election, as they are considered in God's eternal purpose. We shall take notice of some different opinions relating to this question, without making use of those scholastic modes of speaking which render the subject much more difficult than otherwise it would be; and we shall avoid and guard against those extremes which have had a tendency only to prejudice persons against the doctrine in general.

The object of election is variously considered by divines, who treat of the subject. There are some who, though they agree in the most material things in their defence of the doctrine, are divided in their sentiments about some nice metaphysical speculations, relating to the manner in which man is to be considered, as the object of predestination. Some, who are generally styled *Supralapsarians*, seem to explain the matter thus:—God, from all eternity, designed to glorify his divine perfections, in some objects out of himself; which he could not then be said to have done, inasmuch as they did not exist. The perfections which he designed to glorify, were, more especially, his sovereignty and absolute dominion, as having a right to do what he will with the work of his hands; and also his goodness, whereby he would render himself the object of their delight. As a means conducive to this end, he designed to create man an intelligent creature, in whom he might be glorified; and since a creature, as such, could not be the object of the display of his mercy or justice, he farther designed to permit man to fall into a state of sin and misery, that so, when fallen, he might recover some out of that state, and leave others to perish in it. The former class are said to be loved, the other hated. And when some extend the absoluteness of God's purpose, not only to election, but to reprobation, and do not take care to guard their modes of speaking, as they ought to do, but conclude reprobation, at least predamnation, to be not an act of justice, but rather of sovereignty, they lay themselves open to exception, and give occasion to those who oppose the doctrine of election, to conclude, that they represent God as delighting in the misery of his creatures, and with that view giving being to them. It is true, several, who have followed this way of thinking, have endeavoured to extricate themselves out of this difficulty, and denied this, and other consequences of the like nature, which many have thought to be necessary deductions from their scheme. Whether they have done this effectually, or not, may be judged of by those who are conversant with their writings.<sup>h</sup> I cannot but profess that I set a very high value on them in other respects; yet I am not bound to approve some nice speculations, contained in their method of treating this subject, which render their views exceptionable. In particular, I cannot approve of any thing advanced by them, which seems to represent God as purposing to create man, and then to suffer him to fall, as a means by which he designed to demonstrate the glory of his vindictive justice. This notion has given occasion to many to entertain rooted prejudices against the doctrine of predestination, as though that doctrine necessarily involved in it the supposition, that God made man to damn him.

There are others generally styled *Sublapsarians*,<sup>i</sup> who suppose, that God con-

<sup>h</sup> See Twiss. Vind. Grat. et de Predest. and his Riches of God's love, against Hord; and also that part of the writings of some others, in which they treat of predestination, viz. Beza, Gomarus, Piscator, Macrovius, Rutherford, Whitaker, and Perkins.

<sup>i</sup> Among these were Bishop Davenant, and other divines, who met in the synod of Dort; also Calvin, P. Du Moulin, Turretin, and, indeed, the greater number of those who have defended the doctrine of predestination. And there are many others, who, when they treat of it, seem to waive the particular matter in controversy, thinking it of no great importance, or that this doctrine may be as well defended, without confining themselves to certain modes of speaking which have been the ground of many prejudices against it, whose prudence and conduct herein cannot be justly blamed.

sidered men as made and fallen, and then designed to glorify his grace in the recovery of those who were chosen by him to eternal life,—his justice in those whom he designed to condemn, as a punishment for their sins, which he purposed not to hinder, and foreknew that they would commit,—and his sovereignty, in selecting some persons rather than others as the objects of his grace, while he might have left the whole world in that state of misery into which he foresaw they would plunge themselves. That which is principally objected, by those who are in the other way of thinking, against this scheme, is, that the Sublapsarians suppose that God's creating men, and permitting them to fall, was not the object of his eternal purpose. This opinion, however, the Sublapsarians universally deny, and they distinguish between God's purpose to create and suffer men to fall, and his purpose considered as a means to advance his sovereignty, grace, and justice. In this the principal difference between the two parties consists. We shall enter no farther into their controversy, except to add, that whatever may be considered, in God's eternal purpose, as a means to bring about other ends, it seems evident, from the nature of the thing, that God cannot be said to choose men to salvation without considering them as fallen; for as no one is a subject capable of salvation, but he who has fallen into a state of sin and misery, so when God purposed to save such, they could not be considered as to be created, or as created and not fallen, but as sinners.

There are others who deny particular election of persons to eternal life, and explain those scriptures, which speak of it, in a very different way. These suppose that God designed, from all eternity, to create man, and foreknew that he would fall,—that, pursuant to his eternal foreknowledge, he designed to give him sufficient means for his recovery, which, by the use of his free-will, he might improve, or not, to the best purposes,—and that, foreknowing who would improve, and who would reject, the means of grace which he purposed to bestow, he determined, as the consequence of their improving or rejecting them, to save some, and condemn others. This method of explaining God's eternal purpose is exceptionable in two respects, as will appear in the course of our prosecuting this subject. First, they suppose that the salvation of men depends on their own conduct, or the right use of their free-will; and they, in consequence, do not give to God the glory which is due for that powerful, efficacious grace which enables them to improve the means of grace, and brings them into a state of salvation. Secondly, they suppose that nothing absolute is contained in the decree of God, but his foreknowledge, which is rather an act of his understanding than his will. Hence, their system seems to militate against his sovereignty and grace, and, to make his decrees depend on some conditions, founded in the free-will of man, which, according to them, are not the object of a preemptory decree.

*Proofs that Election respects only a part of mankind.*

Having thus considered intelligent creatures, and more particularly men, as the objects of predestination, we proceed to the farther proof and explanation of the doctrine of election. To attain our object, we shall insist on the following propositions: first, that it is only a part of mankind who were chosen to salvation; secondly, that they who were chosen to it, as the end, were also chosen to sanctification, as the means; and thirdly, that they were chosen in Christ. These propositions are contained in that part of the Answer we are considering in which it is said, that 'God has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof.'

Our first proposition, then, is, that some were chosen to salvation,—not the whole race of mankind, but only those who shall be eventually saved. That the whole world is not the object of election, appears from the known acceptation of the word, both in scripture, and in our common modes of speaking. To choose, as was formerly observed, is to take, prefer, or esteem one thing before another, or to separate a part from the whole, for our own proper use, so that what remains is treated with neglect and disregard. It is not a proper way of speaking to say that the whole is chosen. Hence, if all mankind had been foreordained to eternal life, which



God might have done if he had pleased, this determination would not have been called a purpose according to election.

There are other arguments, however, more conclusive than what rests upon merely the known sense of the word. These we shall proceed to consider; and, in treating them, we shall make use of the same method of reasoning which we observed, in proving that God foreordained whatever comes to pass, particularly applying it to the eternal state of believers. The decree of God, as we before observed, is to be judged of by the execution of it, in time. In like manner, those whom God, in his actual providence and grace, prepares for, and brings to glory, he also before designed for it. Were I to treat only of those particular points in controversy which exist between us and the Pelagians, I would first consider the method which God takes in saving his people, and prove that salvation is of grace, or that it is the effect of the power of God, and not to be ascribed to the free-will of man, as separate from the divine influence; and then I would proceed to speak concerning the decree of God relating to his salvation, which might then, without much difficulty, be proved. But being obliged to pursue a method in which things are laid down in their respective connexion, we must sometimes, to avoid the repetition, defer to a following head, the more particular proof of some doctrines, on which our arguments depend. Hence, as the execution of God's decree, and his power and grace manifested in it, will be insisted on in some following Answers, we shall, at present, take these points for granted, or shall speak but very briefly concerning them.

1. That only a part of mankind are chosen to be made partakers of grace and glory, appears from the fact that these invaluable privileges are conferred upon, or applied to, no more than a part of mankind. If all shall not be saved, all were not chosen to salvation; for we are not to suppose that God's purpose relating to salvation can be frustrated, or not take effect. If there be a manifest display of discriminating grace in the execution of God's decree relating to salvation, there is, doubtless, a discrimination in his purpose; and that is what we call election. Accordingly, there are some scriptures which represent those who are saved as a remnant. Thus, when the apostle is speaking of God's casting away the greater part of the Jewish nation, he says of some of them, that, 'at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace;'<sup>k</sup> that is, there are some among them who are brought to embrace the faith of the gospel, and to be made partakers of the privileges which accompany salvation. These are called a remnant. And it is said, 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,' it is no more than 'a remnant' of them that 'shall be saved.'<sup>l</sup> He doubtless speaks in this and other scriptures, concerning the eternal salvation of those who are described as a remnant, according to the election of grace. Here it will be necessary for us to consider, that this 'remnant' signifies only a small part of the Jewish church, selected, by divine grace, out of that nation, of which the greater number were rejected by God; and that the salvation here spoken of, is to be taken not for any temporal deliverance, but for that salvation which the believing Jews should be made partakers of in the gospel-day, when the rejection of the others had its full accomplishment. That this may appear, we shall compare this scripture not only with the context, but with the passage in Hosea, whence it is taken. As to what respects the context, the apostle, in verse 2, expresses his 'great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart,' for the rejection of that nation in general, which they had brought upon themselves. Yet, in verse 6, he encourages himself with this thought, that 'the word of God,' that is, the promise made to Abraham relating to his spiritual seed, who were given to expect greater blessings than those which were contained in the external dispensation of the covenant of grace, 'should not take none effect;' for though the whole nation of the Jews, who were of Israel, that is, Abraham's natural seed, did not attain those privileges, yet a part of them, who are here called Israel, and elsewhere a remnant, chosen out of that nation, should be made partakers of them. The former are, in verse 8, called, 'the children of the flesh;' the latter are called by way of eminence, 'the children of the

promise.' They are also styled 'The vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, to whom he designed to make known the riches of his glory, namely, those whom he had called; not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.'<sup>m</sup> These are they whom he intends by that 'remnant' which were chosen out of each of them; for so the word properly signifies.<sup>n</sup> This sense is farther confirmed, by the quotation out of the prophecy of Hosea,<sup>o</sup> compared with another out of the prophecy of Isaiah.<sup>p</sup> Both quotations speak of only a remnant that shall be saved, when the righteous judgments of God were poured forth on the Jewish nation in general. The prophet Hosea adds another promise relating to them, which the apostle takes notice of, namely, that 'in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.' This promise plainly respects the remnant; for he had before prophesied concerning the nation in general, 'Ye are not,' that is, ye shall not be my people, 'and I will not be your God.' Here, therefore, is a great salvation foretold, which they, among the Jews, should be made partakers of, who were foreordained to eternal life, when the rest were rejected.

It is objected that the prophet seems to speak of a temporal salvation; inasmuch as it is said, in the words immediately following, 'Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel, be gathered together, and shall appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land,' namely of Babylon, 'for great shall be the day of Jezreel.' From these words, it is inferred that the remnant of whom the prophet speaks, who should be called the sons of the living God, are such only as should return out of captivity, not an elected portion, or those of the Jews who believed to eternal life; because, when this prediction was fulfilled, they were to 'appoint themselves one head,' or governor, namely, Zerubbabel or some other, who should be at the head of affairs, and help forward their flourishing state, in or after their return from captivity. It seems very evident, however, that part of this prophecy<sup>q</sup> respects the happiness of Israel, at the time when 'they should seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and should fear the Lord and his goodness, in the latter days.' Why then may not this verse, in chap. i., in which it is said that 'they shall be called the sons of the living God,' also have its accomplishment in the gospel-day, when they should adhere to Christ, who is called, 'David their King?' The only difficulty which affects this sense of the text is, its being said, that they shall return to their own land, under the conduct of 'a head,' or governor, whom they should 'appoint over them,'—language which seems to favour the opinion maintained in the objection. But the sense of the words would be more plain, if, instead of, 'Then the children of Judah, &c., we render the text, 'And the children of Judah,' &c. a rendering which is observed in most translations, and is most agreeable to the sense of the Hebrew word.<sup>r</sup> According to our translation, the passage seems to intimate, that the prophet is speaking of something mentioned in the foregoing verse; and as the one verse respects their return from the captivity, the other also must be supposed to do so. If, however, we put 'and' instead of 'then,' the meaning of the verses together is, that there were two blessings promised. The one blessing was, that a part of the Jewish nation should be made partakers of the saving blessings of the covenant of grace; and this was to have its accomplishment when they were brought to believe in Christ by the gospel, or when this remnant, taken from among them, should be saved. The other blessing was promised to the whole nation; and was to be conferred upon them when they returned from the Babylonish captivity. If it be objected to this sense of the text, that their return from captivity is mentioned after the promise of their being called 'the sons of the living God,' and cannot be supposed to relate to a providence that should happen before it, I need only reply, that it is very usual, in scripture, for the Holy Ghost, when speaking concerning the privileges which the church should be made partakers of, not to mention them in the same order in which they were to be accomplished. Why, then, may we not suppose, that this rule may be applied to this text? Accordingly the sense is this:

<sup>m</sup> Rom. ix. 23, 24.

<sup>n</sup> οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἰουδαίων, non solum ex Judæis; that is, those who are called from among the Jews, as distinguished from the rest of them that were rejected.

<sup>o</sup> Hos. i. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. x. 22.

<sup>q</sup> Viz. Hos. iii. 5.

<sup>r</sup> רבבצור



The prophet had been speaking, in the tenth verse, of that great salvation which this remnant of the Jews, converted to Christianity, should be made partakers of in the gospel-day; then he intimates an objection, as if it had been said, 'How can this be, when the Jews are to be carried into captivity, and there broken, scattered, and, as it were, ruined?' and he adds in answer to this, that the Jews should not be destroyed in the captivity, but should be delivered, and return to their own land, and should remain a people, till this remnant was gathered out of them, who were to be made partakers of the spiritual privileges under the gospel-dispensation.

Having thus endeavoured to prove, that the remnant spoken of in Rom. ix. are such as should be made partakers of eternal salvation, we may now apply what has been said to our present argument. If that salvation, which this remnant was to be made partakers of, be the effect of divine power, agreeably to what the apostle says in the context, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy';<sup>a</sup> and, if it be the gift of divine grace, agreeably to what he says elsewhere, 'By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God';<sup>b</sup> it follows that God designed beforehand to give them these blessings; and if he designed them for only this remnant, then it is not all, but a part of mankind, namely, those who shall be eventually saved, who were chosen to salvation.

2. The doctrine of election may be further proved, from God's having foreknown whom he will sanctify and save. It will be allowed that God knows all things, and, consequently, that he knows all things which are future, and so not only what persons he has saved, but whom he will save. We need not prove that God foreknew all things; for that is not denied by those who are on the other side of the question, or, at least, is denied by very few of them. Indeed, if this were not an undoubted truth, we could not depend on those predictions which respect things that shall come to pass. These predictions refer not only to such events as are the effects of necessary causes, or to things produced according to the common course or laws of nature, but to those which are contingent, or which are the result of the free-will of man. Such things have been foretold, and consequently were foreknown by God. Now, if it be allowed that he foreknew whatever men would be and do, let me add, that his foreknowledge is not an act of the divine mind, merely taking a foreview of events, or observing what others will be or do, without determining that his actual providence should interest itself in them. Hence, if he foreknew the salvation of those who shall be eventually saved, he foreknew what he would do for them, as a means conducive to their salvation; and, if so, then he determined beforehand that he would bring them to glory. But his determination respects only a part of mankind, who were chosen by him to eternal life.

In this sense we are to understand those scriptures which set forth God's eternal purpose to save his people, as an act of foreknowledge. Thus, in Rom. xi. 2, it is said, 'God hath not cast away his people, whom he foreknew;' that is, he has not cast them all away, but has reserved to himself 'a remnant, according to the election of grace.' That he either had or soon designed to cast away the greater number of the Jewish nation, seems very plain from several passages in this chapter. In verses 17, 19, for example, he speaks of 'some of the branches being broken off,' and, in verse 22, he speaks of God's 'severity,' by which we are to understand his vindictive justice in this dispensation. Yet we are not to suppose, says the apostle, that God has cast them all away.<sup>u</sup> Accordingly, he mentions himself as an instance of the contrary; as though he had said, 'I am called, and sanctified, and chosen, though I am an Israelite.' Moreover, God's not casting away this remnant of the Israelites, being the result of his foreknowledge, does not respect merely his knowing what they should be or do, whom he had chosen to eternal life; but is represented as a discriminating act of favour. As to his merely knowing what men should be and do, they who are rejected by him are as much the objects of his knowledge as any others; for the omniscience of God is not the result of his will, but is a perfection founded in his nature, and therefore not arbitrary but necessary

<sup>a</sup> Rom. ix. 16.<sup>t</sup> Eph. ii. 8.<sup>u</sup> As in Rom. xi. 1.

Again, the apostle Peter speaks of some who were 'elected, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto obedience,'<sup>x</sup> &c. This does not mean that they were chosen, because of any obedience performed by them, which God foreknew; for their election is considered as the result of his foreknowledge, not as the cause of it. The word foreknowledge is yet farther explained in another place, where the apostle says, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his.'<sup>y</sup> He had before been speaking of the faith of some, who professed the gospel, being overthrown. Nevertheless, says he, that 'foundation' of hope which God has laid in the gospel, is not hereby shaken, but 'stands sure;' the faithful shall not be overthrown, for 'the Lord knoweth them that are his;' that is, he knows who are the objects of his love, who shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation. Hence, God's foreknowledge, considered as a distinguishing privilege, is not to be understood, merely of his knowing how men will behave themselves, and so taking his measures thence, as though he first knew what they would do, and then resolved to bestow his grace; but it is to be understood of his knowing whom he has set apart for himself or designed to save, with respect to whom his providence will influence their conduct, and prevent their apostasy.

God's knowledge is sometimes taken in scripture for his approving, or loving, those who are its objects. Thus he says to Moses, 'Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.'<sup>z</sup> Here one expression explains the other; and so the knowledge spoken of is a knowledge of approbation. Again, when our Saviour says to some, 'I will profess unto you I never knew you,'<sup>a</sup> it is not to be supposed that he did not know how they would behave themselves, or what they would do against his name and interest in the world. But the words, 'I never knew you,' mean, 'I never approved of you;' and accordingly it is added, 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Further, when it is said concerning knowledge, as applied to man, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God,'<sup>b</sup> no one supposes that a speculative knowledge of divine truths will give any one ground to conclude his right to eternal life. Hence, to know God, is to love him, to delight in him. In the same sense the apostle speaks of God's knowing man, when he says, 'If any man love God, the same is known of him,'<sup>c</sup> that is, beloved by him. Now if God's knowing his people signifies his loving them, his foreknowing them must signify his determining to do them good, and to bestow grace and glory upon them; which is the same thing as to choose them to eternal life. He foreknew what he designed to confer upon them; for he 'prepared a kingdom for them from the foundation of the world.'<sup>d</sup> And this is the same thing as his having, from the beginning, chosen them to salvation.

It is objected that, as all actions, performed by intelligent creatures, as such, suppose knowledge, so their determinations are the result of foreknowledge; for the will follows the dictates of the understanding; that, therefore, we must suppose God's foreknowledge to be antecedent to, and the ground and reason of his determinations; and that the apostle seems to intimate this, when he says, 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate,'<sup>e</sup> that is, he had a perfect knowledge of their future conduct, and therefore determined to save them. Now, I do not deny that, according to the nature of things, we first consider God as knowing, and then as willing. But this does not hold good with respect to his knowing things future; for we are not to suppose that he first knows that a thing shall come to pass, and then wills that it shall. It is true, he first knows what he will do, and then does it; but to speak of a knowledge in God, as conversant about the future state or actions of his people, without considering them as connected with his power and providence as the immediate cause, I cannot think consistent with the divine perfections. As for the scripture, 'Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate,' we are not to suppose that God foreknew that they whom the apostle speaks of would be conformed to the image of his Son, and then, as the result of his knowledge, determined that they should. Their being conformed to Christ's image, consists in their exercising those graces which are agreeable to the temper and disposi-

x 1 Pet. i. 2.  
b John xvii. 3.

y 2 Tim. ii. 19.  
c 1 Cor. viii. 3.

z Exod. xxxiii. 17.  
d Matt. xxv. 34.

a Matt. vii. 23.  
e Rom. viii. 29.



tion of his children, or brethren, as they are here called; and this conformity to his image, is certainly the result of their being called. But their calling, as well as justification and glorification, is the consequence of their being foreknown. Hence, God's foreknowledge must here be taken in the same sense as in the scriptures just quoted,—for his having loved them before the foundation of the world, or chosen them to enjoy those privileges which are here mentioned. [See note 2 U, page 321.]

3. That there is a number chosen out of the world to eternal life, appears further from the means which God has ordained for gathering a people out of it, to be made partakers of the blessings which he has reserved for them in heaven. This is what we generally call the means of grace; and from the nature of it we may learn that there is a chosen people, whose advantage is designed by it.

There always has been a number of persons, whom God, by his distinguishing providence, has separated from the world, who have enjoyed the ordinances, or means of grace, and to whom the promises of eternal life have been made. We do not say that these are all chosen to eternal life; but it appears, from the design of providence in giving them the means of salvation, that there have been some among them, who were ordained to eternal life. If God gives the means of grace to the church, it is an evident token that some are designed to have grace bestowed upon them, and consequently to be brought to glory.

Again, they who have been favoured with the means of grace, have had some peculiar marks of the divine regard to them. Thus we read, in the early ages of the world, of the distinction between those who had the special presence of God among them, and others who were deprived of it. Cain, for example, is said to have 'gone out from the presence of the Lord,'<sup>f</sup> as one who, together with his posterity, was deprived of the means of grace. We read also of God's covenant, in which the Most High promised to be a God to some, while others were excluded. Thus he was called 'the God of Shem,'<sup>g</sup> and afterwards, 'of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,'<sup>h</sup> whose descendants were in consequence given to expect the ordinances, and means of grace, and many instances of that special grace which a part of them should be made partakers of. Now, would he have made this provision, for a peculiar people, in so discriminating a way, if there had not been a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, whom he designed to manifest himself to here, and to bring to glory hereafter? No, he would have neglected or overlooked them, as he did the world. Both they and their seed, however, had the promises of the covenant of grace made to them; and this fact argues, that there was a remnant among them, whom God designed to bring into a state of grace and salvation, and who, in consequence, are said to be the objects of divine love.

This leads us to consider the meaning of that text, which is generally insisted on, as a very plain proof of this doctrine, 'The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth: it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'<sup>i</sup> Here is an express mention of the purpose of God, according to election; and Jacob, pursuant to it, is said to be the object of divine love. For understanding this, let us consider the sense which is given of the passage, by those on the other side of the question; how far that sense may be allowed; what there is in the words to prove our doctrine; and wherein our sense of them differs from theirs.

They who deny particular election, suppose that Jacob and Esau are not here considered in a personal capacity, but that the apostle speaks of their respective descendants. They suppose also that he refers to two divine predictions; in one of which,<sup>k</sup> God told Rebekah, before her two sons were born, that 'two nations were in her womb,' and that 'the elder,' that is the posterity of Esau, 'should serve the younger,' namely that of Jacob; and, in the other of which, God says, 'I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains waste.'<sup>l</sup> We are hence told that if, in both the scriptures referred to by the apostle, nothing else is intended

f Gen. iv. 16.  
i Rom. ix. 11—13.

g Chap. ix. 26.  
k Gen. xxv. 23.

h Exod. iii. 6.  
l Mal. i. 2, 3.

but the difference which should be put between them, as to the external dispensations of providence, or that Jacob's family, in future ages, should be in a more flourishing state than that of Esau, we must not suppose that the apostle designed to represent them as chosen to or excluded from eternal life. This seems a very plausible sense of the text. Yet the apostle's words may very well be so reconciled with the two scriptures cited to enervate the force of the argument taken from them, as that it shall not follow that there is no reference made to the doctrine of eternal election. We will not deny that when it is said, 'Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,' their respective descendants were intended in this prediction. But it does not follow that Jacob and Esau, personally considered, were not also included. Whoever reads their history, in the book of Genesis, will find evidently, in the one, the marks and characters of a person chosen to eternal life; but will discover in the other no account of any regard which he expressed to God or religion,—no evidence that he was not rejected.—Again, so far as respects the posterity of Jacob, and Esau, we are not to suppose that God's having loved the one, and rejected the other, implies nothing else but that Jacob's posterity had a better country allotted for them, or that they exceeded Esau's in those secular advantages or honours which were conferred upon them. This seems to be the principal sense which they, on the other side of the question, give of the apostle's words; for they compare them with those of the prophet Malachi, who, speaking concerning Esau's being hated, explains it as relating to 'his land being laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness.' This had been foretold by some other prophets;<sup>m</sup> and had its accomplishment soon after the Jews were carried captive into Babylon, from which time they ceased to be a nation. But, though this be the particular instance of hatred which the prophet Malachi refers to, yet more is meant by the word, as used by the apostle Paul. The prophet particularly designs to obviate an objection, which the Jews are represented as making against the divine dispensations towards them; as though they had not such an appearance of being the objects of love, as he supposes them to have had. He hence brings them in as speaking to this effect: 'How canst thou say, that God has loved us, who have continued seventy years captives in Babylon, and who, since our return thence, have been exposed to many adverse dispensations of providence?' The prophet's reply is this: That notwithstanding their captivity and adversities, they still remained a nation, and, in this respect, were more the objects of the divine regard than the posterity of Esau; for the latter, who are represented as hated, never returned to their former state, or whatever attempts they made to recover it were all to no purpose. This the prophet alleges as a sufficient answer to the Jews' objection, in the same sense in which they understood the words 'love' and 'hatred.' But doubtless, more was meant in the prediction uttered before Jacob and Esau were born, and in the apostle's application of it in the text in question. If nothing were intended but outward prosperity, or their vying with each other in worldly grandeur, Esau's prosperity might be concluded to have been preferable to Jacob's. When they are reckoned by their genealogies,<sup>n</sup> many of the former are described as dukes and kings, who made a considerable figure in the world. And when Jacob's posterity were few in number, and bondmen in the land of Egypt, and when the Israelites were carried captive into Babylon, the Edomites are represented, by the prophet, as looking on and rejoicing in their destruction, they themselves being at that time, to all appearance, secure, and enjoying their former liberty.—Nor could the love and hatred spoken of signify nothing else than that the descendants of Jacob should be planted in a more fruitful soil. There is little difference put between them, in this respect, in the patriarchal benediction pronounced by their father; who tells Jacob, that 'God would give him the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine;' and says to Esau, 'Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above.'<sup>o</sup> Hence, when the one is described, in the prediction, as loved, and the other as hated, we are not to suppose that outward prosperity on the one hand, or adversity on the other, are principally intended; for that might be

<sup>m</sup> Jer. xlix. 17, 18; Ezek. xxxv. 7, 9; Obad. verse 10.  
<sup>o</sup> Chap. xxvii. 28. compared with 39.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. xxxvii.



said of both of them by turns. I infer, therefore, that God's loving or hating, as applied to the posterity of Jacob or Esau, principally respects his determining to give or deny the external blessings of the covenant of grace, or the means of grace, and therewith many special tokens of his favour. In Jacob's line the church was established, out of which, as has been before observed, there was a remnant chosen and brought to eternal life. How far this may be said of Esau's, is hard to determine.

But it will be objected, that, as is more than probable, Job and his friends were of Esau's posterity, and yet were far from being rejected of God. We reply, that a few single instances are not sufficient to overthrow the sense we have given of this divine oracle; for, as is very agreeable to the sense of many scriptures, the rejection of Esau's posterity may take its denomination from the greater number, without including every individual. Moreover, Job and his friends, as we have sufficient ground to conclude, lived before the seed of Jacob were increased, and advanced to be a distinct nation, as after their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. They lived also before that idolatry, which first overspread the land of Chaldea in Abraham's time, had universally extended itself over the country of Idumea, where Esau's family was situated. Now, though the prediction respecting Esau did not take place in a very considerable degree, in the first descendants from him, it does not follow that it has no reference to their rejection, as to what concerned the spiritual privileges of that people afterwards. Indeed, idolatry seems to have had some footing in the country where Job lived, even in his time. This gave him occasion to exculpate himself from the charge of it, when he signifies that 'he had not beheld the sun when it shineth, or the moon walking in brightness, and his heart had not been secretly enticed, or his mouth kissed his hand.'<sup>p</sup> Here he alludes to some modes of worship, practised by idolaters in his day, who gave divine honour to the sun and moon. And, soon after his time, before Israel had taken possession of Canaan, there seems to have been an universal defection of the Edomites from the true religion. Had this not been the case, Moses doubtless might, without any difficulty, have got leave to pass through their country, in his way to the land of Canaan,—especially as there was no reason to fear that his people would do any thing against them in a hostile manner. Yet he requested this leave in a most friendly and obliging manner, but to no purpose.<sup>q</sup> The unfriendly treatment, therefore, which the Israelites met with from them, proceeded from the same spring with that of the Amalekites, and other bordering nations; it arose from the circumstance that all had revolted from the God and religion of their father Abraham. Hence, the prediction in question seems to have been fulfilled, before the promise respecting Jacob's posterity, in any considerable degree, began to be accomplished.

Having briefly considered this objection, we return to the argument,—namely, that God's loving or hating, in this scripture, as it has a relation to the distinct nations which descended from Jacob and Esau, includes his determining to give or deny the external privileges of the covenant of grace, which we generally call the ordinances or means of grace. These were the spiritual and more distinguishing instances of divine favour, which Jacob was given to expect, when he obtained the blessing. As to the double portion, or greater part, of the paternal estate which descended with the blessing, together with the honour which those who enjoyed it possessed of having dominion over their brethren, or a right, as it is probable they had, to act as civil magistrates in their respective families, these were all small things, compared with those spiritual privileges in which God's love to Jacob and his posterity was principally expressed. It was the bestowal of these privileges which is so often signified by God's being 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' In other respects, Esau was blessed, as well as Jacob. The apostle, speaking concerning that part of Isaac's prediction which respected the temporal advantage of their posterity, says, that 'he blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come.'<sup>r</sup> Yet Esau was rejected, as to what concerns the spiritual part of the blessing. This was the birth-right which he is said to have despised;<sup>s</sup> and hence he is styled by

the apostle, 'a profane person.'<sup>t</sup> If it had been only a temporal privilege which he contemned, his despising it might have been a sin, but it could not have been properly said to be an instance of profaneness, for that has respect only to things sacred. It evidently appears, therefore, that the blessings which Esau despised, and which God had before designed to confer on Jacob and his seed, as a peculiar instance of his love, were of a spiritual nature.

It will be farther objected, however, that men's enjoying the external privileges of the covenant of grace, has no immediate reference to their salvation, or their election to it. But as salvation is not to be attained except by and under the means of grace, we must conclude, that whenever God bestows and continues them to a church or nation, he has a further end in view, namely, the calling some by his grace, to partake of those privileges which accompany salvation. If there were no such blessings to be conferred on the world, there would be no means of grace, and consequently no external dispensation of the covenant of grace; for it is absurd to suppose that anything can be called a means, where all are excluded from the end which it refers to. The sum of this argument, then, is, that God had a peculiar love to the posterity of Jacob, and, accordingly, designed to give them those privileges which were denied to others, namely, the means of grace, which he would not have done, had he not intended to make them effectual to the salvation of some of them. His purpose to this effect, is what is called election. And though this does not apply to all the seed of Jacob, for 'all,' as the apostle says elsewhere, 'are not Israel who are of Israel;' yet, as there was a remnant of them to whom it was applied, these are that happy seed who are represented, by the apostle, as the objects of God's compassion, or as 'vessels unto honour, in whom he designed to make known the riches of his glory,' having, in this respect, 'afore prepared them unto glory.'<sup>u</sup>

Having thus considered that God has chosen a part of mankind to salvation, we may, without being charged with a vain curiosity, since the scripture goes before us in this matter, inquire whether this privilege belongs to the greater or the smaller part of mankind. If we judge of the purpose of God, by the execution of it, it must be observed that hitherto the number of those who have been made partakers of the special privileges of the gospel, has been comparatively small. If we look back to the ages before our Saviour's incarnation, what a very inconsiderable proportion did Israel bear to the rest of the world, who were left in darkness and ignorance! Even after those ages, our Saviour observes that 'many were called,' in his time, 'but few were chosen';<sup>x</sup> and he advises to 'enter in at the strait gate,'<sup>y</sup> by which he means the way to eternal life, concerning which he says that 'there are,' comparatively, 'few who find it.' And when the gospel had a greater spread, and wonderful success attended the preaching of it by the apostles, and many nations embraced the Christian faith, in the most flourishing ages of the church, the number of professing Christians, and much more of those who were converted and effectually called, was comparatively small. Whether at that happy period for which we hope and pray, and which scripture gives us warrant to expect, when there shall be a greater spread of the gospel, and a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit to render it successful, whether there shall then be a greater number of true believers, and whether the fewness of those who have hitherto been chosen and sanctified, shall not be compensated, by the greatness of the multitudes who shall live in that happy age of the church, is not for us to be over curious to inquire. Yet we may ascertain from scripture, that, in the great day, when all the elect shall be gathered together, their number shall be exceeding great; if what the apostle says refers to this matter, as some suppose he does, when he speaks of 'a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.'<sup>z</sup> But these things are no farther to be searched into, than as we may take occasion from them to inquire whether we are of the elected number. If we are, we ought to bless God for his discriminating grace, which he has magnified in our salvation.

<sup>t</sup> Heb. xii. 16.

<sup>v</sup> Matt. vii. 13, 14.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. ix. 15, 21, 23.

<sup>z</sup> Rev. vii. 9.

<sup>x</sup> Matt. xx. 16.



*Proofs that Election has reference to Sanctification.*

We now proceed to show that they who are chosen to salvation are also chosen to sanctification, as the means of it. As the end and means are not to be separated in the execution of God's decree, so they are not to be separated in our conception of the decree itself. Since God brings none to glory, but in a way of holiness, the same he determined to do from all eternity,—that is, to make his people holy as well as happy, or first to give them faith and repentance, and then the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.

There are many scriptures in which the purpose of God, as relating to this, is plainly stated. Thus it is said, 'He hath chosen us that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.'<sup>a</sup> Elsewhere the apostle tells others, that 'God had, from the beginning, chosen them unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.'<sup>b</sup> The apostle James says, 'God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.'<sup>c</sup> Elsewhere the apostle Paul speaks of persons being 'predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son,' which he explains to mean their being 'called, justified, and glorified.'<sup>d</sup> It is also said, respecting those who were converted under the apostle Paul's ministry, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;'<sup>e</sup> and of course they were ordained to believe, as well as to obtain eternal life.

The argument, which seems very plainly contained in these and similar scriptures, is, that God's eternal purpose respects the grace which his people are made partakers of here, as well as the glory which they expect hereafter. That these are inseparably connected, cannot reasonably be denied by those who are not willing to admit the doctrine of election. But if the inseparable connection between faith and salvation be allowed, as having respect to the execution of God's purpose, it will be no difficult matter to prove that this was determined by him, or that his purpose respects faith, as well as salvation. Hence the main thing in this controversy is, whether this grace which accompanies salvation is wrought by the power of God, or depends on the free-will of man. That which induces our opponents to deny that God has chosen persons to faith, is the supposition, that that which is the result of man's free-will, cannot be the object of God's unchangeable purpose. They accordingly assert, that the grace which accompanies salvation depends on man's free-will; and hence infer that God has not chosen men to it. This is the hinge on which the whole controversy turns. If the doctrine of special efficacious grace be maintained, all the prejudices against that of election would soon be removed. But the consideration of this we must refer to its proper place, as we shall have occasion to insist on it when discussing some other answers.<sup>f</sup> What may be farther considered under a following head concerning the absoluteness of election, as one of the properties that belong to it, will also add some strength to the present argument. All that we shall do at present is, to defend our sense of the scriptures now referred to,—to prove that election respects sanctification, as well as salvation.

The first of these<sup>g</sup> proves that holiness is the end of election, or that it is the thing to which persons are chosen. This appears from the grammatical construction of the words. It is not said, 'he has chosen us, considered as holy, and without blame,' but 'he has chosen us *that we should be holy*.'<sup>h</sup> Now that which is plainly intended, as the result of election, cannot be the cause and reason of it.

As to what the apostle says, 'God hath, from the beginning, chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth,'<sup>i</sup> this plainly intimates, that sanctification is the end of election. The principal answer which some give, which appears to be an evasion, is, that the apostle does not speak of eternal election, because God is said to have done this 'from the beginning,' that is, as one explains the words, from the beginning of the apostle's preaching to them. But if we can prove that there is such a thing as a purpose to save, it will be no

a Eph. i. 4.

b 2 Thess. ii. 13.

c James ii. 5.

d Rom. viii. 29.

e Acts xiii. 48.

f See Questions lxvii. lxxiii. lxxv. lxxvi.

g Eph. i. 4.

h *ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἁγίους.*

i 2 Thess. ii. 13.

difficult matter to prove the eternity of the divine purpose. Nor is this disagreeable to the sense in which the words, 'from the beginning,' are elsewhere used.<sup>k</sup>

As for that scripture in which it is said, 'God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom,'<sup>l</sup> the words, 'that they may be,'<sup>m</sup> which are inserted by the apostle in the scripture but now mentioned, may, without any strain on the sense, be supplied; and so the meaning is, 'God hath chosen them, *that they might be* rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.' If it will not be allowed, that these words ought to be supplied, the sense is the same as though they were. The passage is as if it had been said, 'God has chosen the poor of this world, who are described as rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom.' We distinguish, in the same manner, between election being founded upon faith, and faith being a character by which the elect are described. If faith be a character by which they are described, then he who enabled them to believe, purposed to give them this grace,—that is, he chose them to faith, as well as to be heirs of the kingdom.

As for the text, 'He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son,'<sup>n</sup> the words, 'to be,' are supplied by our translators, as I apprehend they ought, for the reason but now mentioned, taken from the parallel scripture, in Eph. i. 4. But, to evade the force of the argument, to prove that we are predestinated to grace, as well as to glory, they who deny this doctrine, give a very different turn to the sense of this text; and regard the apostle as meaning only that the persons whom he speaks of were predestinated to an afflicted state in this life, a state of persecution, in which they are said to be conformed to the image of Christ.<sup>o</sup> But though it is true that believers are said to be made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, and, by consequence, are predestinated to become so; yet this does not appear to be the sense of the text in question, and does not well agree with the context. The apostle had been describing those whom he speaks of, as loving God, and as called according to his purpose; and he then considers them as predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. This, then, must be meant of their being made partakers of those graces in which their conformity to Christ consists, as well as in sufferings. Accordingly, he considers them, in the following verse, as 'called, justified, and glorified.' And all this is the result of their being predestinated.

As to that scripture, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,'<sup>p</sup> the faith of the persons spoken of is considered as the result of their being ordained to eternal life; in other words, they are represented as predestinated to the means, as well as to the end. But it will be objected, that this is not agreeable to the sense of the Greek word here used.<sup>q</sup> The objection is founded partly on the fact that it is not said they were *foreordained* to eternal life, but *ordained*,—a phrase the genuine sense of which, it is alleged, is, that they were '*disposed* to eternal life,' and consequently to faith, as the means of it. Some understand this phrase in a different sense, and suppose that it imports a being disposed, by the providence of God, or set in order, or prepared, for eternal life. Others, agreeably to the exposition which Socinus, and some of his followers, give of the text, understand the words, as signifying their having an internal disposition, or being well inclined, as having an earnest desire after eternal life, for which reason they believed, or were fitted and prepared for eternal life, by the temper of their minds, and accordingly they believed. With this opinion a late learned writer agrees.<sup>r</sup> To these objections we reply, that if the word which we render 'ordained,' be justly translated, the thing which they were ordained to being something that was future, it is, in effect, the same, as though it were said, they were foreordained to it, as Beza observes.<sup>s</sup>—Again, suppose the word ought rather to be translated, 'they were disposed unto eternal life,' it seems to contain a metaphor, taken from a general's disposing, or ordering, his soldiers to their respective posts, or employments, to which he appoints them. The passage is then as if it had been said, 'As many as God had, in his providence, or antecedent purpose, intended for salvation, believed; inasmuch as faith is the means and way to attain it.' This amounts to the same thing as our

k See Prov. viii. 23.  
p Acts xiii. 48.

l James ii. 5.  
q *προαγαγμενοι*.

m *οτι*. n Rom. viii. 29.  
r Vid. Whitby in loc.

o Vid. Grot. in loc.  
s Vid. Beza in loc.



translation.—As to the other sense proposed, namely, their being internally disposed for eternal life, it seems very discordant with the import of the Greek word. Those texts which are generally brought to justify it, appear to be very much strained and forced to serve the purpose.<sup>t</sup> Indeed, even if the word would bear such a sense, the doctrine, that there are some internal dispositions in men, antecedent to the grace of God, whereby they are fitted and prepared for it, does not well agree with the sense of those scriptures which set forth man's natural opposition to the grace of God, before he is regenerated and converted, and his enmity against him; or with others which assert the absolute necessity of the previous work of the Spirit, to prepare for as well as excite the acts of faith.

It is farther objected, that the passage cannot respect their being ordained or chosen to eternal life who believed; inasmuch as none who plead for the doctrine of election suppose that all who are elected in one place, believe at the same time. Had it been said, that all who believed at that time, were ordained to eternal life, the words, it is alleged, would be agreeable to what is maintained by those who defend the doctrine of election; but to say, that all who are elected to eternal life, in any particular city, are persuaded to believe at the same time, is what the advocates of that doctrine will not allow. Besides, say the objectors, it is not usual for God to discover to, or by, the inspired writers, that, in any particular place, there are no more elected than those who are, at any one time, converted. Indeed, it is contrary, they add, to the method of God's providence to bring in all his elect at one time; so that we cannot suppose that the matter in question was revealed to the inspired writer. They, hence, conclude that, not eternal election, but something else, must be intended, namely, that all those who were prepared for eternal life, or who were disposed to pursue it, believed.<sup>u</sup> To this objection we reply that, when the apostle says, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,' we are not led into the hidden mystery of the divine will, so as to be able to judge whether more than they who then believed, in that place, were ordained to it. The meaning is merely that there were many who believed, and that all of them were ordained to eternal life. Hence, the passage is as if it had been said, 'God has a people in this place, whom he has ordained to eternal life, who were to be converted, some at one time, others at another. Some of them were converted at this time, namely a part of those who were ordained to eternal life, if more were ordained to it.' The objection supposes, that the word which we render 'as many as,' imports the whole number of the elect in that place. We think, however, that the meaning is, that there were many who believed, and that these were only such as were ordained to eternal life. But there might be many more so ordained, who then did not believe, but hereafter should. This remained a secret, which the inspired writer was not led into, nor we by him.

There is another objection, which the learned author<sup>x</sup> whose paraphrase on the New Testament, and discourse on election, I am sometimes obliged to refer to, in considering the objections which are made against this doctrine, proposes with a great deal of warmth; and if no reply can be given to it, it will be no wonder to find many prejudiced against it. His words are these: "If the reason why these men believed be only this, that they were men ordained to eternal life, the reason why the rest believed not, can be this only, that they were not ordained by God to eternal life; and if so, what necessity could there be, that the word of God should be first preached to them, as we read, ver. 46? Was it only that their damnation might be the greater? This seems to charge the Lover of souls, whose tender mercies are over all his works, with the greatest cruelty; seeing it makes him determine, from all eternity, not only that so many souls, as capable of salva-

<sup>t</sup> The principal text which Dr. Whitby refers to, as justifying his sense of the word, is Acts xx. 13, 'We went to Assos, there intending to take in Paul, for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.' The words are, *οὕτω γὰρ ἢ διαταγμένου μὲλλον αὐτὸς πίζειν*, which he understands as if the meaning were that the apostle was disposed, in his own mind, to go afoot. But that sense is not agreeable to the scope of the text. The meaning of it seems to be this: that it was determined, ordered, or preconcerted by them, before they set sail, that Paul should be taken in at Assos, since he was to go there afoot. Hence, this makes nothing to that author's purpose, but rather sanctions the sense which we have given of the word.

<sup>u</sup> See Grot. in loc.

<sup>x</sup> See Dr. Whitby in loc.

tion as any other, shall perish everlastingly; but also to determine, that the dispensations of his providence shall be such towards them, as necessarily tends to the aggravation of their condemnation. And what could even their most malicious and enraged enemy do more? What is it the very devil aims at, by all his temptations, but this very end, namely, the aggravation of our future punishment? And therefore to assert that God had determined that his word should be spoken to these Jews, for this very end, is to make God as instrumental to their ruin, as the very devil, and seemeth wholly irreconcilable with his declarations, that he would have all men to be saved, and would not that any man should perish." We must either quit the doctrine we are maintaining, provided it be the same as this author represents it to be, or we must be charged, by all mankind, with such horrid blasphemy, as is shocking to any one who reads it, as charging the Lover of souls with the greatest cruelty, and with acting in such a way as their greatest enemy is said to do,—determining, that the dispensations of his providence should tend to aggravate their condemnation, and that the gospel should be preached for this end, and no other. But let the blasphemy rest on this author's misrepresentation. Far be it from us to advance any such doctrine. In answer to him, we remark that the immediate reason why men believe to eternal life, is that God exerts the exceeding greatness of his power, whereby he works faith; and the reason of his exerting this power, is that he determined to do it, for the exerting of it is the execution of his purpose. But it does not follow, that the only reason why others do not believe is, that they were not ordained to eternal life. Their not having been ordained to eternal life, it is true, or God's not having purposed to save them, is the reason why he does not exert that power which is necessary to work faith; and unbelief will certainly be the consequence, unless man could believe without the divine energy. Yet the immediate spring or cause of unbelief is the corruption and perverseness of human nature; which is chargeable on none but man himself. We must certainly distinguish between unbelief being the *consequence* of God not working faith, and its being the *effect* of this. By its being the consequence of it is understood, that corrupt nature takes occasion, from the absence of preventing grace, to exert itself. Is God's denying the revengeful person, or the murderer, that grace which would prevent his executing his bloody designs, the cause of his crimes? Or his denying to others the necessary supply of their present exigencies, the cause of their making use of unlawful means, by plundering others, to subsist themselves? No more is his denying special grace, which he was not obliged to give to any, the cause of men's unbelief and impenitency. These are to be assigned only to that wicked propensity of nature, which inclines us to sin, and not to the divine efficiency. And how far soever they may be the result of God's determining to deny his grace, they are not to be reckoned the effect of his determination.—Again, the design of the word's being preached, is not, as the vile misrepresentation I am considering suggests, to aggravate the damnation of those who shall not believe. The design is that men may be led by the gospel to know their duty, and that the sovereignty of God, and the holiness of his law, which requires faith and repentance, as well as man's obedience, may be made known to the world. I do not deny, that unbelief, and the condemnation consequent upon it, are aggravated by the giving of the gospel. That they are so, appears from many scriptures; as when our Saviour upbraids Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and other places where he ministered, with their unbelief, and represents their condemnation as greater than that of others who were destitute of gospel privileges. It is a malicious insinuation, however, to say that we conclude that the gospel was given for this end. We must distinguish between the aggravation of condemnation being the *result*, or the remote consequence, of giving the gospel, and its being the *effect* of it, in those who reject the gospel. Much more must we make this distinction as to the *design* of God in giving it.—Further, God's denying that grace which would have enabled men to believe, is not to be charged as an instance of cruelty, any more than his denying it to fallen angels. It is rather a display of his justice. He was not obliged to give grace to any of the apostate race of man. Shall his



denying the grace of faith be reckoned an instance of cruelty, when we consider the forfeiture which was formerly made of it, and man's propensity to sin, which is chargeable only on himself?—Nor is God's purpose to deny the grace of faith to those whom he has not ordained to eternal life, inconsistent with that scripture, 'He will have all men to be saved.'<sup>z</sup> This text, as will be farther observed elsewhere,<sup>a</sup> respects either God's determining that salvation should be applied to all sorts of men, or his declaring, by his revealed will, that it is the duty of all men to believe and to acknowledge the truth, as made known to them in the gospel.

*The Elect are Chosen in Christ.*

They who are elected to salvation, are chosen in Christ. It is expressly said, 'He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.'<sup>b</sup> We are not to suppose that the apostle intends hereby, that we are chosen for the sake of Christ, as though any of his mediatorial acts were the ground and reason of our being chosen. Election is an act of sovereign grace, or is resolved into the good pleasure of the will of God, and is not to be accounted a purchased blessing. When we speak of the work of the Mediator, with relation to it, it is to be considered as a means ordained by God, to bring his elect to salvation, rather than the foundation of their election. This proposition necessarily follows the former; for if they who are chosen to the end, are chosen to the means, Christ's mediatorial acts being the highest and first means of salvation, God's eternal purpose respects these, as subservient to salvation.

There are some very considerable divines<sup>c</sup> who distinguish between our being chosen in Christ as a Head, and our being chosen in him as a Redeemer. They conclude, that there are two distinct relations in which the elect are said to stand to Christ, both of which are mentioned by the apostle, when he says, 'Christ is the Head of the church, and the Saviour of the body,'<sup>d</sup> and also when he says, 'He is the Head of the body the church, and hath made peace through the blood of his cross.'<sup>e</sup> They add, that the elect are considered as his members, without any regard had to their fallen state; and that the blessings involved in this are such as render their condition more honourable and glorious, than it would have been had they been considered only as creatures, without any relation to him as their Head. This Headship of Christ they extend not only to men, but to the holy angels, whom they suppose to be chosen, in this respect, in Christ, as well as men; and they say that it is owing to this that they have the grace of confirmation conferred upon them. It follows, also, that Christ would have been the Head of the election of grace, though man had not fallen, and that our fallen state rendered that other relation of Christ to his elect necessary. Hence, as chosen to salvation, they are chosen in him as a Redeemer, designed to bring about this great work for them, and, for this end, set up 'from everlasting.'<sup>f</sup>

This distinction of Christ's double relation to the elect, is, doubtless, designed by those who adopt it to advance his glory. Yet it remains a matter of doubt with me, whether Christ's Headship over his church be not a branch of his mediatorial glory; and if so, it will be very difficult to prove that a Mediator respects any other than man, and him more particularly considered as fallen. Accordingly, God designed by the work of mediation, not to advance him to a higher condition than what was merely the result of his being a creature, but to deliver him from that state of sin and misery into which he foresaw that he would plunge himself. Hence, in considering the order of God's eternal purpose relating to the salvation of his people, we must suppose that he first designed to glorify all his perfections in their redemption and salvation. In order to this he foreordained, or appointed, Christ to be their great Mediator, in whom he would be glorified, and by whom this work was to be brought about. He appointed him to be their Head, Surety, and Redeemer, first to purchase salvation for them, and then to make them meet for it, in the same order in which it is brought about by him in the execution of his purpose.

<sup>z</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.  
Vol. ii. of Election.

<sup>a</sup> See Quest. xlv. lxviii.  
<sup>d</sup> Eph. v. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Eph. i. 4.  
<sup>e</sup> Col. i. 18—20.

<sup>c</sup> See Dr. Goodwin,  
<sup>f</sup> Prov. viii. 23.

Thus, as the glory of God, in the salvation of the elect, was the end, Christ's redemption was the means more immediately conducive to it. Accordingly, Christ is said to be foreordained to perform those offices which he executes as Mediator.<sup>s</sup> And as, when he was manifested in the flesh, he did all things for his people which were necessary to bring them to glory, he is, in God's purpose, considered as the great Mediator, by whom he designed this work should be brought about. Hence, when he is set forth in the gospel as a propitiation for sin, the apostle seems to speak of his being such, as the result of God's purpose. His words are, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.'<sup>h</sup> The Greek word<sup>i</sup> translated 'set forth,' properly signifies, as is observed in the marginal reference, 'foreordained.' Accordingly, we must consider him as from all eternity, in God's purpose, appointed to be the federal Head of those who are said to be chosen in him, and to have all the concerns of the divine glory relating to their salvation committed to his management. [See note 2 V, p. 322.]

*The Eternity, Wisdom, Secrecy, Absoluteness, and Unchangeableness of the Purpose of Election.*

We shall now consider the properties of election, and how the divine perfections are displayed in it, agreeably to what is said concerning it in scripture.

1. As election is taken for the purpose of God, relating to the sanctification or salvation of men, as distinguished from the execution of that purpose, it is eternal. This is evident. God being eternal, his purposes must be concluded to be of equal duration with his existence. We cannot suppose that an infinitely wise and sovereign Being existed from all eternity, without any forethought or resolution what to do. To suppose this would be to represent him to have been undetermined, or unresolved, when he first gave being to all things. Nor is it to be supposed that there are any new determinations in the divine will. To suppose this would argue him to be imperfect. New determinations would be an instance of mutability in him, as much as it would be for him to alter his purpose. But to suppose either of these, does not accord with the idea of an infinitely perfect Being. Moreover, if God's purpose, with respect to the salvation of men, were not eternal, it must be considered as a new after-thought arising in the divine mind, which, as to its first rise, is but, as it were, of yesterday; and he would then have something in him that is finite. If it be contrary to his omniscience to have new ideas of things, it is equally contrary to the sovereignty of his will to have new determinations. We conclude, therefore, that all his purposes were eternal.

2. God's purpose relating to election is infinitely wise and holy. This appears from the footsteps of infinite wisdom and holiness, which are visible in the execution of it, in bringing men to grace and glory. Nothing is more conspicuous than the glory of these perfections in the work of redemption, and in the application of it. The salvation of man is brought about in such a way, that the glory of all the divine perfections is secured; and the means made use of, as conducive to it, are the most proper which could have been used. It is, hence, a work of infinite wisdom. And as God discovers in it the infinite opposition of his nature to sin, and thereby advances the glory of his holiness, it follows that these perfections of the divine nature had their respective concern, if we may so express it, in the purpose relating to it. Whatever glory is demonstrated in the execution of his purpose, was certainly included in the purpose itself.

3. The purpose of God relating to the final state of man, is secret, or cannot be known till he is pleased to discover it. Nothing is more obvious than this. Even the purposes or resolutions of creatures are secret till they are made known by them. Thus the apostle says, 'What man knoweth the things of a man,' that is, what he designs to do, 'save the spirit of a man which is in him?' And he infers, in the following words, 'so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.'<sup>k</sup> Elsewhere he says, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been



his counsellor?'<sup>1</sup> For this reason, God's purpose is called, 'the mystery of his will.'<sup>m</sup> That it is secret follows also from its being eternal. It was hid in God from before the foundation of the world; and consequently would for ever have been so, had he not, by his works or word, made some discoveries of it to those whom he brought into being. It could not have been known that God had purposed to save any, had he not revealed this in the gospel. Much less have any particular persons ground to conclude themselves to be elected, without first observing those intimations which God has given, whereby they may arrive at the knowledge of their being so. This consideration ought to be duly weighed by those who deny and are prejudiced against the doctrine of election; yet they generally overlook it in the opposition which they offer. They will not consider the distinction we make between God's having chosen a person to eternal life, and a person's having a right to conclude that he is thus chosen. On the other hand, they take it for granted, that if there be such a thing as election, we must necessarily determine ourselves to be the objects of it, and ought to regulate our future conduct accordingly. It is from this assumption they conclude, that the doctrine of election leads men to presumption, or gives them occasion to say that they may live as they list. Our belief, however, is, that it is an instance of presumption in any one to determine that he is elected, unless there be some discovery made to him that he is; and that this discovery cannot take its rise from God, unless it be accompanied with that holiness which is, from the nature of the thing, inconsistent with our being led to licentiousness. Here we may take occasion to state, that God does not make known his secret purpose relating to this matter to any by inspiration; especially since that extraordinary dispensation of providence has ceased. Indeed, it never was his ordinary way to discover it in this manner to those, who, in other instances, were favoured with the gift of inspiration. The means by which we come to the knowledge of our being elected, is God's giving certain marks or evidences of grace, or showing us the effects of the divine power, in calling and sanctifying us. By these means we have a warrant to conclude that we were chosen to eternal life; and if we make a right improvement of them, and see, by an appeal to the holiness of our lives, that our judgment concerning our state is rightly founded, we are in no danger of abusing this great and important doctrine, to the dishonour of God, or our own destruction.

This leads us to consider a distinction, which we are often obliged to make use of, when we speak concerning the will of God. The distinction is between his secret and his revealed will. By this we account for the sense of many scriptures; and we take occasion from it to answer several objections which are brought against the doctrine of election. I am sensible that there is nothing advanced in defence of the doctrine which they who are in the other way of thinking are more prejudiced against, than this distinction. They suppose it to contain a reproachful idea of the divine Majesty. Many popular prejudices also against the doctrine we are defending are founded on it. We are represented as saying that God has a secret meaning, different from what he reveals; or that we are not to judge of his intentions by those discoveries which he makes of them. This, we are told, would be the highest reproach to charge any creature with, and contrary to that sincerity which God cannot be destitute of, and it consequently exhibits him as the object of detestation; so that no one who conceives of an holy God in such a way as he ought to do, can entertain a thought, that a secret as distinguished from a revealed will is, in even the least degree, to be ascribed to him. This is the common misrepresentation which is made of this distinction. Whether it arises from the distinction not being sufficiently explained by some, or from a fixed resolution to decri the doctrine of election and render it odious, as it must certainly be if supported by a distinction understood in so vile a sense, I will not determine. That we may remove this prejudice, however, by considering how the distinction is to be understood in a sense more agreeable to the divine perfections, we shall proceed to explain it.

We remark, then, that the will of God is sometimes taken, in scripture, for that which he has, from all eternity, determined, which is unchangeable, and shall

1 Rom. xi. 34.

m Eph. i. 9.

certainly come to pass, and which it is impossible for any creature to disannul, resist, or render ineffectual. This is such a branch of divine sovereignty, that to deny it, would be, in effect, to deny him to be God. It is this which the apostle intends, when he represents the malicious and obstinate sinner as replying against God, and defending himself in his bold crimes, by saying, 'Why doth he yet find fault; for who hath resisted his will?'<sup>n</sup> and when the apostle, in reply, asserts the sovereignty of God, that he is not accountable to any for what he does, nor to be controlled by them. This also is what is intended, where it is said that 'God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,'<sup>o</sup> and where God says, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.'<sup>p</sup> This will of God is the rule of his own acting. And as it determines the event of things, it is impossible for him to act contrary to it; for it is discordant with his perfections to signify to his creatures that he determines to do one thing, while he will do another. In this sense, we are far from asserting that there is a revealed will of God, which contradicts his secret.

The will of God is often taken in scripture, also, for what he has prescribed to us as a rule of duty, or as a rule of our judging concerning the apparent event of things. The will of God, considered as a rule of duty, is a well-known and proper sense of his revealed will. Thus our Saviour teaches us to pray, 'Let thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' Here, he principally intends God's revealed will; and his words mean, 'Enable us to yield obedience to thy law, in our measure, as thou art perfectly obeyed in heaven.' He elsewhere says, 'Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.'<sup>q</sup> These words can be meant of no other than his revealed will, or of his law in which it is contained; because no one can act contrary to God's determination in that sense of his will, which we formerly mentioned. A doing his will, in that sense, therefore, would not have been laid down as a distinguishing character of those whom Christ preferred above all who were related to him in the bonds of nature. The apostle understands the will of God in the sense of his revealed will, when he says, 'Thou knowest his will.'<sup>r</sup> Here he speaks to the Jews, who were instructed out of the law, in which the will of God is contained. Elsewhere<sup>s</sup> he speaks of his will, as what is to be obeyed; and describes his faithful servants as persons who 'do the will of God,' namely, what he has commanded, 'from the heart.' There are many other scriptures thus to be understood; and this we call his revealed will, as it is the rule of duty and obedience.

The revealed will of God may also be considered as a rule which he has given us, whereby we are to judge of the apparent event of things. I make this a branch of God's revealed will, inasmuch as sometimes he condescends to discover future events to his creatures, which otherwise they could never have known. Yet there is a difference as to the manner of their judging of the events, corresponding to the intimations which he has given them. When, for example, God has told us expressly, that this or that particular thing shall come to pass, we are infallibly sure concerning the event, and need no other rule to judge of it, but by considering it as revealed. Thus when he has said that there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, and that Christ shall come to judgment, and receive his redeemed and sanctified ones to heaven to behold his glory, we are infallibly assured of these events, because they are expressly revealed. And when we speak of the secret and revealed will of God, as applicable to things of this nature, we intend nothing but what all will allow, that that which would have been for ever a secret, had it not been discovered, is now revealed, and therefore ceases to be so. In that sense, the revealed will of God, in all respects, agrees with his secret; for we suppose that God expressly revealed the event. But there are instances, in which the event of things is not expressly revealed; as when God has discovered to us only what is the rule of our duty. But as it is natural for man, when any duty is commanded, to pass some judgment concerning the event, and as we suppose the event not expressly revealed, it follows that the judgment which we pass concerning it, is

<sup>n</sup> Rom. ix. 19—22.

<sup>q</sup> Mark iii. 35.

<sup>o</sup> Eph. i. 11.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. ii. 18.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. xlv. 10.

<sup>s</sup> Eph. vi. 6.



only what appears to us, or what, according to our rule of judging, seems to be the probable event of things. In this case, we are not infallibly assured concerning it; and when we pass a judgment relating to it, we may conclude that some consequences may attend our present duty, which, perhaps, will never come to pass. If a general of an army gives a command to his soldiers to march towards the enemy, they will readily conclude that he designs, by his command, that they should enter on some action; and had he expressly told them this, either he must change his purpose, or the event must certainly happen. But as he has not discovered his purpose to them, all the judgment which they can at present form concerning it, is only such as is founded on the appearance of things; and the event might probably afterwards show, without any impeachment of his veracity or conduct, that his only design was to try whether his soldiers would obey the word of command. If, in the same way, a king should order a number of malefactors to the place of execution, without discovering his actual intention, the apparent event is their immediate death; but, if pursuant to his secret purpose, he resolved there to give a pardon to them, it cannot be supposed that he changed his purpose. The event makes it appear, that his purpose was not then known. Whatever the apparent event might be, his real design was to humble them for their crimes, and afterwards to pardon them.

It is only in such instances as these that we apply the distinction between secret and revealed will to the doctrine which we are maintaining. It must, therefore, be a very great stretch of malicious insinuation for any one to suppose, that by this distinction we charge God with insincerity in those declarations of his revealed will, by which we pass a probable judgment concerning the event of things. We shall illustrate the distinction by particular instances. God commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac;<sup>t</sup> yet it is certain, unless we suppose that he altered his purpose, that he intended, not that he should lay his hand upon him, but, when Isaac was upon the altar, to forbid him to do it. Here was a great and a difficult duty, which Abraham was to perform pursuant to God's revealed will, which was the rule of his obedience. Had Abraham known that God designed to hold his hand, and prevent him from striking the fatal blow, it would have been no trial of his faith; for it would have been no difficult matter for him to do every thing else which his obedience involved. The holy patriarch knew well that God could prevent him from doing it; but that he would do so he had no ground to conclude, because he had no divine intimation concerning it. What appeared to him to be the event was the loss of his son; and he reconciled this with the truth of the promise before given him, that 'in Isaac his seed should be called,' by supposing, as the apostle observes, that God, at some time or other, 'would raise him from the dead.'<sup>u</sup> Hence, what Abraham, judging, not by an express revelation, but by the voice of providence, concluded, was that Isaac must be slain by his hand. Yet this was contrary to the real event, as is evident from the account given in scripture. And as the real event was agreeable to the divine determination, as all events are, it follows, that there is a difference between the will of God determining the event of things which shall certainly come to pass accordingly, and the revelation of his will relating to what is the creature's present duty. The latter may appear to them, when judging only by the command, which is the rule of duty, and some circumstances which attend it, to be contrary to what will afterwards appear to have been the real design of God. God's real design was to try Abraham's faith, and to prevent him from slaying his son, when he had given a proof of his readiness to obey him. But this was at first a secret to Abraham; and the apparent design was, that he should slay him.—There is, hence, a foundation for the distinction, as we have explained it, between the secret and the revealed will of God. The former belongs not to us; nor are we to take our measures from it, as being unknown. And when the latter appears contrary to it, we must distinguish between two things which are contrary in the same and different respects, or between the judgment which we pass concerning events which are apparent to us, and, at most, are only probable and conjectural, and those events, which, though they are infallibly cer-

<sup>t</sup> Gen. xxii. 2.<sup>u</sup> Heb. xi. 19.

tain, yet are not revealed, nor can be known till they come to pass. In this sense, when they seem to oppose each other, we understand the distinction between God's secret and his revealed will. This it was necessary for us thus to explain, as we shall frequently have occasion to mention and apply the distinction, when we account for the difference that there seems to be, between the purpose of God relating to the event of things, and our present views of it. We shall then understand and account for the difficulties contained in several scriptures relating to this subject. These I would have mentioned in this place, for the farther illustration of the distinction, had it been necessary. But what I have said is sufficient to explain and vindicate the distinction from the prejudices entertained against it, by those who are disposed to misrepresent what is said in defence of the doctrine of election.

From what has been said, concerning God's secret and revealed will, we may infer that it is a great boldness, and an unwarrantable instance of presumption, for any one to enter into or judge of God's secret purpose, so as peremptorily to determine, beyond the present appearance of things, that this or that shall certainly come to pass. 'Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever.'<sup>x</sup> No one, therefore, ought to determine that he is elected to salvation, before the work of grace is wrought, and some way or other made visible to him; or, on the other hand, to determine that he is rejected or reprobated, when he has no other ground to go upon, but uncertain conjecture, which would be a means to drive him to despair. That some are elected, and others rejected, is no secret, because God has revealed the fact in his word; so that we may assert it as a proposition, undoubtedly true, provided we do not apply it to particular persons. This doctrine, therefore, has not that pernicious tendency which many pretend that it has.—Again, the first act of saving faith does not consist in our believing that we are elected; neither is it the duty of unregenerate persons, as such, to apply this privilege to themselves, any more than to conclude themselves rejected. Our business is, so long as the purpose of God remains a secret to us, to attend on the means of grace, hoping and waiting for the display of divine power, in our effectual calling, and afterwards for the Spirit's testimony or seal to be set to it, whereby he discovers his own work. When this is done, our personal election may, in some measure, be reckoned a branch of his revealed will, and will afford us matter of thanksgiving and praise to him, and a foundation of peace and comfort in our own souls. But this may be farther insisted on, when we come to consider the improvement we ought to make of this doctrine of election.

4. The purpose of God relating to election, is free and sovereign, or absolute and unconditional. That which would be a reflection on the divine perfections, if applied to God's method of working, is by no means to be said concerning his purpose to work, or, which is the same, his decree of election. Hence, if there are no obligations laid on him by his creatures to display or perform any of his works of grace, so that these are all free and sovereign, it follows that the foresight of anything which shall be done by them, in time, could not be the motive or reason of his purpose or decree to save them, or of his choosing them to salvation.

This may be farther argued, from the independence of the divine nature. If his nature and perfections are independent, his will must be so. But, more particularly, the displays of God's grace in time, are, in scripture, expressly resolved into his sovereign pleasure. 'He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'<sup>y</sup> And there are many other scriptures, which might be referred to, where all merit or motives taken from the creature, which might be supposed to induce him to bestow spiritual and saving blessings, are entirely excluded, and the whole is resolved into the glory of his own name, and, in particular, of those perfections which he designed to illustrate. This is applied even to the common blessings of providence: 'Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.'<sup>z</sup> And it is also applied to sparing mercy, or the exercise of God's patience, 'For my name's sake will I defer mine



anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.'<sup>a</sup> It is applied likewise to pardoning mercy, 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.'<sup>b</sup> And when he is represented as doing great things for his people, he puts them in mind of their own vileness and unworthiness, that the freeness and sovereignty of his grace to them might be more conspicuous. Thus, when he tells them how he delivered Israel out of Egypt, he puts them in mind of their idolatry in that land; so that there could be no motive relative to their behaviour towards him which induced him to deliver them: 'But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt; then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them, in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.'<sup>c</sup>

If the grace of God, and consequently his purpose relating to it, were not absolute, free, and sovereign, all the glory of it could not be attributed to him, nor would boasting be excluded. As the creature might be said to be a worker together with God, so he would lay claim to a share, if not to the greatest part, of the honour which will redound to him from it. But this is directly contrary to the divine perfections, and to the great design of the gospel. Let it farther be considered that a conditional purpose to bestow a benefit, cannot take effect till the condition be performed, and that, accordingly, it is said to depend on it. This is obvious from the known idea affixed to the word 'condition,' or from the common signification of it. It follows, therefore, that the performance of the condition is the proximate or immediate cause of a conditional purpose taking effect. Hence, if, by our performing the condition of God's purpose to save us, that purpose be rendered effectual, or if, by our not performing the condition, the purpose be ineffectual, we are indebted more to our own conduct than to the divine purpose, and so the glory will be due to ourselves. This would not only cast the highest dishonour on the divine perfections; but it is contrary to the design of the gospel, which is to stain the pride of all flesh, and take away all occasions of glorying from the creature. The prophet Isaiah, foretelling the glory of the gospel-state, considers its tendency to humble the pride of man, when he says, 'The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.'<sup>d</sup> The apostle Paul, describing the nature of faith, considers its tendency to be to 'exclude boasting.'<sup>e</sup> And our Saviour, speaking concerning the discriminating grace of God as it appears in election, either in his purpose relating to or in the execution of it, says, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;'<sup>f</sup> that is, 'You have done nothing that has laid any obligation on me to choose you; but that act of faith, whereby you are inclined to prefer me to all others, is the consequence and result of my discriminating grace.'

We shall now proceed to consider those arguments, which are generally made use of by persons in the other way of thinking; to support the conditionality of God's purpose, as well as that of his works of grace, in opposition to what has been said concerning their freeness and sovereignty. They generally appeal to those scriptures which are expressed in a conditional form. The apostle, for example, speaks of such a 'confession of Christ with the mouth' as is attended with 'believing in the heart, that God raised him from the dead, and calling on the name of the Lord.'<sup>g</sup> Our Saviour says, that 'whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;'<sup>h</sup> and that 'he that believeth shall be saved;'<sup>i</sup> and elsewhere, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'<sup>k</sup> Many other scriptures of a similar nature are adduced, whence they argue, that since the dispensations of God's providence, the gifts of his grace, and the execution of his purpose, are all conditional, the purpose itself must be so. Were it conceded that election is conditional, whether it respects the purpose or providence of God, we should meet with no opposition from those who are on the other side of the question. But as such a pur-

a Isa. xlviii. 9.

b Psal. xxv. 11.

c Ezek. xx. 8, 9.

d Isa. ii. 17.

e Rom. iii. 27.

f John xv. 16.

g Rom. x. 9—13.

h John iii. 16.

i Mark xvi. 16.

k Luke xiii. 3.

pose to save as is not absolute, peremptory, or independent on the will of man, has, as we have already shown, many absurd consequences attending it, which are derogatory to the glory of the divine sovereignty, so the doctrine of such a purpose cannot be the sense of those scriptures, now mentioned, and others of a similar nature which are laid down in a conditional form. No sense of scripture can be true or just that has the least tendency to militate against any of the divine perfections. There hence may, without any strain or violence offered to the sense of words, be another sense put upon these and all similar scriptures whereby they may be explained agreeably to the analogy of faith.

All such scriptures are to be understood as importing the necessary connection of things, so that one shall not be brought about without the other. Accordingly, repentance, faith, and all other graces, are no otherwise considered in them, than as inseparably connected with salvation. The truth of this remark depends upon one of those propositions which were formerly laid down, namely, that God, having chosen to the end, has also chosen to the means. We are far from denying that faith and repentance are necessary to salvation. God never gives one without the other; and consequently, they are inseparably connected in his eternal purpose relating to them. If nothing else were intended by a conditional purpose than this, we would not offer anything against it. But to understand the phrase in this sense, would certainly be to use words without their known or proper ideas; for the word 'condition,' as applicable to other things, is never to be understood in this sense. There is a necessary connection between God's creating the world, and his upholding it, or between his creating an intelligent creature, and his giving laws to him; but none ever supposed one of these to be properly a condition of the other. So a king's determining to pardon a malefactor, is inseparably connected with his pardoning him; and his pardon given forth is inseparably connected with the malefactor's obtaining a right to his forfeited life; but it is not proper to say, that one of these things is a condition of the other. A person's seeing, is, in the same way, inseparably connected with the opening of his eyes; and his speaking, with the motion of his lips; but we do not say, when he determines to do either of them, that the one is a condition of the other. A condition, properly speaking, is not only connected with the privilege which follows the performance of it; but it must be performed by a subject, acting independently of him who made the conditional overture or promise. If it be said, that a duty which we are enabled to perform by God, who promised the blessing connected with it, is properly a condition, we will not contend about the propriety or impropriety of the word. But the word 'condition,' is understood by many, when applied to divine things, in the same sense as in matters of a lower nature; and so is used to signify the dependence of the blessings promised, or of the efficacy of the divine purpose relating to them, upon our performance of the condition; and the performance of it, whereby we come to have a right and title to eternal life, is supposed to be in our own power. Now it is principally as thus understood, that we oppose the use of the word 'condition,' when we assert the absoluteness of God's purpose.

Again, whatever ideas there may be of the nature of a condition, in those scriptures which are brought to support the doctrine we are opposing, nothing more is intended by them than that what is connected with salvation is a condition of our claim to it, or of our expectation of it. In this sense, we will not deny that faith and repentance are conditions of salvation; for it would be an unwarrantable instance of presumption, for impenitent and unbelieving sinners to pretend that they have a right to salvation, or to expect the end without the means, these being inseparably connected in God's purpose, as well as in all his dispensations of grace. Taking this, then, as a general rule for our understanding all those scriptures, which are usually brought to prove that God's purposes are sometimes conditional, we shall illustrate it, by applying it to three or four of these scriptures, which are often quoted. These we shall endeavour to explain, consistently with the doctrine we are maintaining.

One is in Gen. xix. 22, where the angel bade Lot 'escape to Zoar,' telling him, that 'he could not do anything till he came thither.' If we suppose this to have



been a created angel, as most divines do, he must be considered as fulfilling the purpose of God, or as acting pursuant to his commission. It is therefore the same to our present argument, as though God had told Lot, that he could do nothing till he was gone from that place. He had plainly given him to understand, that he should be preserved from the flames of Sodom, and that, in order to this, he must flee for his life; and he adds, that 'he could do nothing,' that is, he could not destroy Sodom consistently with the divine purpose to save him, till he should have escaped out of the place. God designed to preserve him alive, not as he did the three Hebrew captives, by saving him in the fire, but by his escaping from it. His escape was as much foreordained as his preservation, or was designed as a means conducive to it. The meaning of the text, therefore, is, not that God's purpose, relating to Sodom's destruction, was founded on Lot's escape, as an uncertain and dubious condition depending on Lot's will, abstracted from the divine determination; but that he designed the two things to be connected together, and that the one should be antecedent to the other. Both of them as well as their respective connection, were the object of God's absolute and peremptory determination.

There is another scripture, sometimes brought to the same purpose, where the angel says to Jacob, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh,' and Jacob replies, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'<sup>1</sup> But this does not imply, that God's determinations were dependent on Jacob's endeavour to detain the angel, or on his willingness to let him depart. We must consider Jacob as an humble, yet importunate suppliant,—as one who was 'weeping and making supplication.'<sup>m</sup> 'Let me go,' says God, appearing in the form of an angel, and speaking after the manner of men, that he might give occasion to Jacob to express a more ardent desire of his presence and blessing, as well as to signify how unworthy he was of it. But he does not say this as though he was undetermined beforehand what to do; for as the grace which Jacob exercised, as well as the blessing which he received, was God's gift, and both were connected in the execution of his purpose, we must conclude that the purpose itself was free, sovereign, and unconditional.

There is another scripture, in which God condescends to use a similar mode of speaking; it is that in which he says to Moses, concerning Israel, 'This is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.'<sup>n</sup> We are not to suppose, however, that the whole event was to turn upon Moses' prayer, as though God's purposing to save his people were dependent on it, or that that grace which inclined Moses to be importunate with God, did not take its rise from him. Moses, indeed, when he began to plead with God, knew not whether his prayer would be prevalent or not; and he addresses himself, with an uncommon decree of importunity, for sparing mercy. And when God says, 'Let me alone,' it signifies that his people were unworthy that any one should plead their cause, and that if God should mark iniquity, Moses' intercession would be altogether in vain, and so he might as well let him alone, in that respect, as ask for mercy. God does not, indeed, at first tell him what he designed to do, that he might aggravate their crime; but afterwards he answers his prayer in Israel's favour, and signifies that he would work, not for their sakes, but for his own name's sake. He, hence, takes occasion to set forth, on the one hand, the people's desert of punishment, and, on the other, the freeness of his own grace.

There is but one scripture more that I shall mention, among many that might have been brought; and that is what is said concerning our Saviour, in Matt. xiii. 58, that 'he could not do many mighty works,' at that time, in his own country, 'because of their unbelief.' Here the evangelist speaks either of their not having a faith of miracles, which was sometimes required in those for whom they were wrought, or of the unaccountable stupidity of that people, who were not convinced by the many which he had already wrought before them. Christ resolves, therefore, to put a stop to his hand, and not, for the present, to work so many miracles amongst them, as otherwise might have been expected. If we suppose that their want of faith prevented his working them, it is not to be considered as an unforeseen

event. As he had determined not to confer faith upon them, or not to continue to work miracles amongst them, if those which he had already wrought were disregarded and despised by their unbelief, we must conclude that he had beforehand a perfect knowledge of what occurred, and that his determinations were not dependent on uncertain conditions. He had resolved that he would act in such a way as was most for his own glory, and that there should be an inseparable connection between that faith which was their duty, and his continuing to exert divine power, as an ordinance adapted to excite it.

5. God's purpose concerning election is unchangeable. This is the result of his being infinitely perfect. Mutability is an imperfection which belongs only to creatures. It would be an instance of imperfection, if there were the least change in God's understanding, so as to know more or less than he did from all eternity. The same must be said with respect to his will, which cannot admit of any new determinations. There are, indeed, many changes in the external dispensations of his providence, which are the result of his will, as well as the effects of his power; yet there is not the least appearance of mutability in his purpose. We have before considered, in speaking concerning the immutability of the divine nature,<sup>o</sup> that whatever may be a reason obliging men to alter their purposes, cannot, in the least, so operate that God should be obliged to alter his. No unforeseen occurrence can render it expedient for him to change his mind; nor can any superior power oblige him to do it; nor can any defect of power to bring about what he had designed, exist to occasion him to alter his purpose. To object that the obstinacy of man's will may do it, is to suppose that his will is exempted from the governing influence of divine providence, and that, as a contrary force offering resistance, it is superior to the divine will. But this cannot be supposed, without detracting from the glory of the divine perfections. It would be a very unworthy thought for any one to conclude that God is one day of one mind, and another day forced to be of the contrary. How far this is a necessary consequence from that scheme of doctrine which we are opposing, let any one judge. It will be very hard to clear it of this consequence; yet this they are obliged to do, else all the absurdities which they fasten on the doctrine of election, which are far from being unanswerable, will not be sufficient to justify their prejudices against it.

They who are on the other side of the question, are sensible that they have one difficulty to conflict with, namely, the inconsistency of God's infallible knowledge of future events, with a mutability of will relating to them; or how the independency of the divine foreknowledge is consistent with the dependence and mutability of his will. To remove this difficulty, some have ventured to deny the divine prescience; but that is to split against one rock, while endeavouring to avoid another. Others make a distinction concerning the objects of the divine prescience, and consider them, either as they are necessary or as they are contingent. They suppose that God has a certain foreknowledge of the former; but that his knowledge of the latter, from the nature of the things known, is uncertain, and that, therefore, the determination of his will is not unalterable. But this is to set bounds to the foreknowledge of God, with respect to its object, and, indeed, to exclude the free actions of the creature from being the objects of it. It is a limiting and lessening of this perfection, directly contrary to the idea of omniscience. We must insist, therefore, on their proving this to be consistent with the infinite perfection of God, which they will find it very difficult to do. To suppose, on the other hand, that any thing is the object of God's certain foreknowledge, about which his will is in no way conversant, or about which it is conversant only in such a way as to be subject to change according to the mutability of things, is altogether as indefensible, and equally subversive of the independency, wisdom, and sovereignty of the divine will.

The most material objection against the unchangeableness of the divine will, is taken from some scriptures which seem to represent God as repenting, and therein, as is supposed, changing his purpose. He is sometimes for example, said to repent that he had bestowed some blessings upon men, when he perceives how they have been abused by



them; and he, accordingly, purposes to bring evil on them. Thus we read, 'It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created.'<sup>p</sup> At other times, he is said to repent of the evil which he designed to bring upon them, and to alter his purpose in their favour. Thus it is said, 'The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.'<sup>q</sup> Again, 'Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.'<sup>r</sup> Further, 'Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.'<sup>s</sup> Again, 'If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.'<sup>t</sup> We have also a very remarkable instance in God's sparing Nineveh, on their repentance, after he had threatened, by the prophet Jonah, that 'within forty days they should be destroyed.' Now, we grant that there are many scriptures in which repentance is ascribed to God, which, if we consider nothing else but the grammatical sense of the words, seem to favour the objection. But we are bound to conclude, that such a sense of repentance as that on which the objection is founded, is inconsistent with the divine perfections; and that therefore the scriptures referred to cannot imply a change in God's purpose. Indeed, there are other scriptures which assert what is directly contrary. It is said, for example, 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?'<sup>u</sup> And elsewhere, it is said, 'The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.'<sup>x</sup> Now, we must have recourse to some methods to reconcile this seeming contradiction; and must consider the respective sense of each class of texts. In some scriptures, God is said to repent; in others, it is said that he cannot repent. That these may not appear inconsistent with one another, nor either of them infer any imperfection in God, let it be considered that God is sometimes represented, in scripture, in condescension to our common mode of speaking, as though he had human passions, just as, in others, he is described as though he had a body or bodily parts. Such expressions are always to be taken in a metaphorical sense, without the least supposition that he is subject to any such imperfections. Particularly, we must not conclude, that repentance is ever ascribed to God in the same sense as it is to men, that is, as implying a change in his purpose, occasioned by any unforeseen occurrence. This is the sense in which it is understood in the objection. But such a repentance is a passion peculiarly belonging to the creature. That it is so is just what is taught in these words, 'God is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent.' Accordingly, he is said to repent, not by changing his purpose, but by changing his work. Thus when it is said, that 'he repented that he had made man,' nothing is meant but that he determined to destroy him, as he did afterwards by the flood. This was no new determination, arising from any taunting in the creature, which God did not foresee. He knew beforehand that all flesh would corrupt their way; and therefore his determination to punish them for it, was not a new resolve of the divine will, after the sin was committed. God determined things in their respective order;—first he determined to permit sin, and then, knowing what would be the consequence, namely, that they would rebel against him, he determined to punish it, or to destroy the old world,—which is, in effect, the same as though he had repented that he made it. He cannot be said to repent, as we do, by wishing that he had not done that which he is said to repent of; but he repents by denying us the advantage which we might have otherwise expected from what he has done. In this sense we are to understand all those scriptures which speak of God, as repenting of the good that he had bestowed on man. Nor, on the other hand, does his being said to repent of the evil which he threatened to bring on men, as in the case of Nineveh, argue any change in his purpose. He determined that Nineveh should be destroyed, provided they did not repent; and

p Gen. vi. 6, 7.

q Deut. xxxii. 36.

r Joel ii. 13.

s Psal. xc. 13.

t Jer. xviii. 8.

u Numb. xxiii. 19.

x 1 Sam. xv. 29.

it was not uncertain to him whether they would repent or not; for, as appears by the event, he determined to give them repentance, and so not to inflict the judgment threatened. Hence, when Jonah was sent to make a public proclamation to the people, that in forty days they should be destroyed, it is plain that they understood the threatening to mean, that they had no ground to expect any thing else but destruction, unless they repented. They accordingly did repent, and so were spared; without having any reason to conclude that God changed his purpose relating to them. If it be objected, that this interpretation is nothing less than to establish a conditional purpose in God, and so overthrows the argument which we are maintaining, we reply that a distinction is to be made between a conditional purpose in God's secret will, and a conditional proposition which was to be the subject of the prophet's ministry. The prophet, it is plain, was not told, when he received his commission to go to Nineveh, that God would give them repentance, but only that, without repentance, they should be destroyed. Yet as appears by the event, God had determined that they should repent, and therefore that they should not be destroyed. Hence, we must not suppose that, when God sent him, he was undetermined, in his own purpose, whether to destroy them or not, or that there was any thing conditional in the divine mind which rendered the event uncertain to God; though there was a condition contained in the prophet's message, namely, that the Ninevites had no ground to expect deliverance without repentance. This condition the Ninevites very well understood; and hence they repented, in hope of obtaining mercy, which they supposed would be connected with their repentance. It is evident, that Jonah himself suspected that this might be the event, though God had not told him that it would be so; for he says, 'I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.'<sup>y</sup>

6. The purpose of God, in choosing men to eternal life, renders their salvation necessary, so that nothing shall defeat or disannul it. What God says concerning Israel's deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, may be applied to all his other determinations, and particularly to what relates to the eternal salvation of his people: 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.'<sup>z</sup> The purposes of God are distinguished from his bringing them to pass. It is one thing to design to bring his people to glory, and another thing to bring them to it. It is not to be supposed that the decree of God has, in itself, a proper efficiency to produce the thing decreed;<sup>a</sup> for then there would be no difference between an eternal decree, and an eternal production of things. But the apostle plainly distinguishes between man's being predestinated to glory, and his being brought to it, when he says, 'Those whom he predestinated, them he also glorified.'<sup>b</sup> The purpose of God is, indeed, the internal moving cause, or the first ground and reason of the salvation of those who are elected to it; but his power is the more immediate cause of it. So that his purpose is the reason of his exerting this power; and both concurring to the salvation of men, render it certain and necessary. Hence, some distinguish between the determining and the powerful will of God. The latter of these is sometimes called, 'the word of his power,' and renders the former effectual. This it must certainly do, otherwise God would be said to will the existence of things that shall never have a being. In this respect the purpose of God renders things necessary, which are in themselves contingent or arbitrary, and which would otherwise never come to pass.<sup>c</sup> [See Note 2 W, page 323.] This fact is a great encouragement to those who are enabled to make their calling and election sure. Their perseverance in grace, notwithstanding all the opposition that they meet with, is the necessary consequence of their election to eternal life.

<sup>y</sup> Jonah iv. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Isa. xlvii. 10, 11.

schoolmen, *Decretum Dei, nihil ponit in esse.*

<sup>a</sup> This is what is meant by that axiom, used by the

<sup>b</sup> Rom. viii. 30.

<sup>c</sup> Thus the schoolmen distinguish between *necessitas consequentis*, and *consequentiae*; so that that which is not in itself necessary, is rendered eventually so, as the consequence of God's purpose, that it shall be.



*Doctrine of Reprobation.*

We formerly distinguished predestination into election and reprobation; and having considered the former of these, we now proceed to speak concerning the doctrine of reprobation. This doctrine is obnoxious to those on the other side of the question, almost to a proverb. If any doctrine is considered as shocking, and to be answered no otherwise than by testifying their abhorrence of it, it is compared to that of reprobation. Yet, if it were not a consequence from the doctrine of election to eternal life, it would not be so much opposed by them. How far some unguarded expressions, or exceptionable methods of explanation may have given occasion for their prejudice, it is not to our present purpose to inquire. We shall take occasion, however, to explain it in such a way, as that a fair and unprejudiced disputant will not see just reason to object to it, or at least to reproach it as though it were a doctrine subversive of the divine glory, and to be defended by none but those who seem to have a design to raise prejudices in the minds of men against religion in general.

Here we shall consider the meaning of the word, as it is contained in or deduced from scripture. The same word which is there used to signify the execution of this decree, may be applied to express the decree itself. We read of God's rejecting or disregarding men, as a punishment of their rebellion against him; and these are compared by the prophet Jeremiah to 'reprobate silver, because the Lord hath rejected them,'<sup>d</sup> or, as in the margin, 'the refuse of silver.' In the New Testament, the same word<sup>e</sup> is translated sometimes 'reprobates,' at other times 'disapproved' or 'rejected.'<sup>f</sup> Now when this disapprobation or rejection, respects not only their actions as contrary to the holy nature of God, but their persons as punished for their iniquities, and when their punishment is considered as what respects their eternal state as the objects of vindictive justice, the purpose of God relating to it, is what we call 'reprobation.'

But, to consider more particularly the sense of the word, it seems, in scripture, to contain two ideas. The first idea is, God's determining to leave a part of the world in that state of sin and misery which he, from all eternity, foreknew that they would bring themselves into, or his decreeing not to save them. And since all will allow that a part of mankind shall not be saved, it cannot reasonably be denied that this was determined by him beforehand. This is what divines generally call 'preterition.' The other idea in the word 'reprobation,' which is also contained in scripture, or deducible from it, respects the purpose of God to punish those for their iniquities whom he will not save. Not to be saved, is the same as to be 'punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.' God's purpose relating to this, is expressed, in scripture, by his 'appointing them to wrath,'<sup>g</sup> for those sins which he foresaw they would commit. This is what some call 'predamnation.' The word is based on a passage in Jude.<sup>h</sup> The apostle describes some who had 'crept into the church unawares,' as 'ungodly men,' that is, notoriously so, who 'turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever;' and concerning these he says, 'they were before, of old, ordained to this condemnation.' Here God is represented as punishing sinners, in proportion to their crimes; and his doing so is considered as the result of that eternal purpose, which was founded on his foresight of their contracting that guilt whereby they would render themselves liable to punishment.

If the doctrine of reprobation be thus explained, it will appear agreeable, not only to scripture, but to the divine perfections, and therefore too great a truth to be treated with that abhorrence which many without explaining, distinguishing, or fairly entering into the merits of the cause, express against it. It is a very easy matter to render any doctrine odious, by misrepresentation, as they, on the other side of the question, have done this of reprobation. We shall briefly consider how

d Jer. vi. 30.  
g 1 Thess. v. 9.

e ἀδοκίμοι.

f 1 Cor. ix. 27. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Heb. vi. 8.  
h Jude, ver. 4, 13.

they misrepresent it; and shall take leave to explain it in such a manner that it will appear not only worthy to be defended, as redounding to the glory of God, but a plain and evident truth, founded on scripture. If it were to be considered no otherwise than as it is often represented by them, we should dislike it as much as they do. They pretend that we suppose God to be severe and cruel to his creatures, delighting himself in, and triumphing over them, in their misery; that he decreed, from all eternity, to damn the greatest part of mankind, without any consideration of their sin, or as the result of his arbitrary will or dominion, he having a right to dispose of his creatures according to his pleasure; that as a means to attain this end, as though it were in itself desirable, he leaves them to themselves, blinds their minds, hardens their hearts, and offers those occasions of and inducements to sin which are as stumblingblocks in their way; that he determined that his providence should be so conversant about the will of man, as that it should be under a natural necessity, or kind of compulsion, to what is evil, without considering the corruption and depravity of nature, as a vicious habit which they had contracted, and that all this is done in pursuance of the decree of reprobation. It is very probable that many who give this account of the doctrine, have no other foundation for it, than the popular outcry of those who are not apprized of the methods which are generally taken to explain and defend it. Or they suppose that it cannot be defended, without being exposed to those exceptions which are contained in the account they give of it. We shall take no farther notice of their misrepresentation; but shall proceed to explain and defend it another way.

1. As to the former branch of the doctrine of reprobation, namely, preterition, or God's passing by or rejecting those whom he hath not chosen to salvation, let it be premised, that God, in his eternal purpose, considered all mankind as fallen. Man's fallen state must be supposed to have been foreknown by him, otherwise he could not be said to be omniscient. The result of his foreknowledge of it is his determining to leave a part of them in their fallen state, in which he might have left the whole to perish, without being liable to the charge of injustice. That is what we call his rejecting them; and, accordingly, it is opposed to his having chosen the rest to eternal life. These terms of opposition are plainly contained in scripture. Thus it is said, 'The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'<sup>i</sup> They were not blinded by God's leading them into mistakes, or giving them false ideas of things; but they were left to the blindness of their minds, which was the result of their apostacy from God. Again, our Saviour says, 'Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.'<sup>k</sup> 'Thou hast hid,' that is, thou hast not revealed them,—and that either objectively, as respecting those who are destitute of the light of the gospel, or subjectively, as he did not effectually or savingly enlighten them with the light of life, by 'revealing Christ in them,' as the apostle calls it.<sup>l</sup> Our Lord's words are as if he had said, 'Thou hast determined not to give to some the means of grace, nor to others the saving efficacy thereof,—such as they are partakers of who are chosen to salvation.' Accordingly, he is said to have 'suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;'<sup>m</sup> that is, not to have restrained or prevented the breakings forth of corruption, as he might have done. He is said also to have 'winked at,'<sup>n</sup> that is, as the word may be rendered, 'overlooked,' the greatest part of the world, which is no other than his rejecting them, or passing them by. In this sense we are to understand that difficult mode of speaking used by the apostle, 'Whom he will he hardeneth.'<sup>o</sup> By this nothing else is intended but his purposing to leave many to the hardness of their own hearts. God forbid that any one should think that there is a positive act affirmed in these words, as though God infused hardness into the hearts of any. The meaning is only this, that he determined to deny heart-softening grace to that part of mankind whom he had not foreordained to eternal life. That there was a purpose relating to them, is evident; because whatever God does, in the methods of his providence, is the result of an eternal purpose. This no one, who observes the dispensations of God's

i Rom. xi. 7.  
m Acts xiv. 16.

k Matt. xi. 25.  
n Chap. xvii. 30.

l Gal. i. 16.  
o Rom. ix. 18.



providence, and allows, as every one must do, that all he does was preconcerted by him, can justly deny.

But that which must be farther inquired into, as to this matter, is, whether God's determining to pass by a part of mankind be an act of sovereignty, or of justice. And this also may be judged of, by the external dispensations of his providence. So far as there is sovereignty, or justice, visible in them, we are to conclude that his purpose was the result of one or the other of these perfections. In some respects it is an act of sovereignty. For example, when God gives one nation the gospel, or the means of grace, and denies it to another, it is not because he sees any thing in one part of the world more than in another which obliges him to give it, but, as was observed in the scripture but now mentioned, 'because it seemed good in his sight.'<sup>p</sup> Moreover, his giving special grace, whereby some are effectually called and sanctified, and his denying it to others, is an act of sovereign pleasure. On the other hand, God is said sometimes, in the external dispensations of his providence, to leave men to themselves,—to give them up, in a judicial way, to their own hearts' lust. This supposes not only their commission of sin, but their being obstinate, and resolutely determined to continue in it. Thus God saith concerning his people, 'Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels.'<sup>q</sup> The psalmist says, 'Add iniquity to their iniquity.'<sup>r</sup> These words I would consider rather as a prediction than as a prayer,—or as an expression of the church's acquiescence in God's righteous judgments, which they had ground to conclude he would inflict on an impenitent incorrigible people. These are expressed by 'adding iniquity to iniquity;' not as though he designed to infuse any habit of sin into them, for that is inconsistent with the holiness of his nature, but because he would reject and leave them to themselves, in a judicial way, as a punishment inflicted on them for their iniquities, the consequence of which would be their own adding iniquity to iniquity. Thus, in different respects, the purpose of God, in passing by a part of mankind, may be considered, either as the result of his sovereign pleasure, or as an act of justice. [See Note 2 X, page 324]

2. We shall now proceed to consider the other branch of reprobation, which some call 'predamnation,' or, to use the scripture-expression before referred to, God's foreordaining those who shall not be saved, to that condemnation which they shall fall under, as exposing themselves to it by their own wickedness. This is nothing else but his determining, from all eternity, to punish those, as a judge, who should, by their own crimes, deserve it, and thereby to vindicate the holiness of his nature and law. Here let it be observed, that when this doctrine is reproached or misrepresented, it is described as an act of divine sovereignty. But that it is so, we are as ready to deny and oppose as they are. According to the description we have given of it, it can be no other than an act of justice. If to condemn or punish be an act of justice, then the decree relating to this act must be equally so; for the one is to be judged of by the other. If God cannot punish creatures as such, but as criminals and rebels, he must be supposed to have considered them as such, when, in his eternal purpose, he determined to punish them. None can style this an act of cruelty or severity in God, but those who reckon the punishing of sin to be so, and are disposed to charge the Judge of all with not doing right, or with offering an injury to his creatures, when he pours forth the vials of his wrath on those who, by their bold and wilful crimes, render themselves obnoxious to punishment. Here let it be considered, that God, in his actual providence, is not the author of sin, though he suffer it to be committed in the world. And, since his permitting or not hindering it cannot be said to be the cause of its being committed, there being no cause of this but the will of man, it follows that God's punishing sin is not to be resolved into his permission of it, as the cause, but into the rebellion of man's will, as refusing to be subject to the divine law. In this light it was that God considered men, when, in his eternal purpose, he determined to condemn those whose desert of punishment was foreseen by him from eternity. And is this a doctrine to be so much decried?

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xi. 26.

<sup>q</sup> Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12.

<sup>r</sup> Psal. lxix. 27.

I cannot but wonder that the learned author, whom I before have referred to as opposing this doctrine,<sup>s</sup> should accord with the common and popular way of misrepresenting it; unless, indeed, he designed, by this way of opposing it, to render it detested. Speaking concerning those mentioned in Jude 4, 'who were before, of old, ordained to this condemnation,' he says, "This cannot be meant of any divine ordination, or appointment of them, to eternal condemnation, because it cannot be thought, without horror, that God doth thus ordain men to perdition, before they had a being." If he had expressed his horror and resentment against God's ordaining men to perdition, as creatures, it had been just; but to express detestation against God's ordaining men to perdition, who are described as these are, is to expose this doctrine without reason. His casting this censure upon it, is still more strange, from his acknowledging, in his farther explication of this text, "that God ordaineth none to punishment but sinners, and ungodly men, as these persons here are styled; and that these were men of whom it was before written, or prophesied, that they should be condemned for their wickedness." There is not much difference between saying, that the condemnation of sinners for their wickedness 'was before written or prophesied,' and saying, that God foreordained them to eternal punishment.

I am sensible that many are led into mistake on this subject, by supposing that we give a very injurious and perverse sense of the text in Romans, in which the doctrine of reprobation is taught: 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.'<sup>t</sup> Some suppose that we understand this text as though these vessels of wrath were, from all eternity, prepared for destruction by God, and that his eternal purpose is his fitting them for it, or his intending to bring about that end, namely his destroying them. But if any have expressed themselves in a way equivalent to this, let them be accountable for their own sense of the text. I may say, however, that even some of those who follow the supralapsarian method of explaining the doctrine of predestination, have not understood it in this sense.<sup>u</sup> The sense which I would give of it is, that those whom the apostle speaks of as 'vessels of wrath,' are persons whom God had rejected, and whom, from the foresight of the sins which they would commit, he had, as the apostle elsewhere expresses it,<sup>x</sup> 'appointed to wrath.' But they were appointed to wrath not as creatures, but as sinners. They are described as fitted to destruction, not by God's act, but their own, and that is the reason of their being foreordained to it.<sup>y</sup>

There is another scripture, generally cited by those who treat on this subject, which we are to use the utmost caution in explaining, lest we give just occasion to those who oppose the doctrine to express their abhorrence of it, as inconsistent with the divine perfections. The scripture to which I refer is Rom. xi. 7—10. There the apostle says concerning those who were not elected, whom he calls 'the rest of the Jewish nation,' that 'they were blinded,' and that 'God had given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;' and he speaks of 'their table being made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence to them;' and adds, 'let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.' The sense which they who mis-

<sup>s</sup> See Whitby's Paraphrase, &c., on Jude, ver. 4.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. ix. 22.

<sup>u</sup> Thus Beza in loc. calls them vessels, because, as creatures, they are the workmanship of God, the great Potter, but vessels prepared for destruction by themselves, and therefore adds, '*Exiitii verus causas minime negem in ipsis vasis habere juxta illud, perditio tua ex te est.*'

<sup>x</sup> 1 Thess. v. 9.

<sup>y</sup> It ought to be observed, that the word here used is *κατηρτισμένα εις απωλειαν*, and not *προκαταρτισμένα*; nor is there anything added to the word which signifies that this preparation was antecedent to their being, or as though it took its rise from God, as the cause of that sin for which he designed to punish them. On the other hand, when the apostle, in the following verse, speaks of God's 'making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,' that is, the elect, they are described as those whom he had 'before prepared unto glory,' *ἀ προητοιμασεν εις δοξαν*. What should be the reason that the apostle alters the phrase, but that we may be led to consider, that when God chose the elect to glory, they are considered, in his purpose, as those whom he designed by his grace to make meet for it? So that the vessels of wrath are considered as fitting themselves for destruction; while the vessels of mercy are considered as persons whom God would first prepare for, and then bring to glory.



represent the doctrine of reprobation suppose we put upon this scripture, is, that they who are reprobated, have, as a consequence of their being so, occasions of sin laid in their way, some things designed to blind their minds, to cast a mist before their eyes, and to lead them out of the way, and other things which prove a snare to them, a trap, and occasion of sin,—and all this with a design to bring about that condemnation which God had ordained for them in the decree of reprobation. This sense of the text never was or could be given, by any one who has a due regard to the divine perfections. And shall the doctrine be judged of by this misrepresentation, when it is very hard to find any, how unguarded soever they are in their modes of speaking, who interpret the text in the sense alleged? We shall state what is probably the meaning of this scripture; with which the doctrine we have laid down is very consistent. The passage is not to be understood as though God were the author of those sins which the persons described are charged with. Their blindness or stupidity, which is called ‘a spirit of slumber,’ as it is connected with the idea of their being rejected of God, and his determining not to give them the contrary graces, is considered as the consequence, not as the effect, of his determination,—and that not the immediate, but the remote consequence; in the same sense as stealing is the consequence of poverty, in those who have a vicious inclination to commit theft. When a person who has contracted those habits of sin which tend to turn men aside from God, is destitute of preventing and restraining grace, the consequence is, that his corruptions will break forth with greater violence. But God is not obliged to give this grace to an apostate, fallen creature, much less to one who has misimproved the means of grace; by a due attention to which, a multitude of sins might have been prevented. Hence, nothing is intended but this, that they are left to themselves, and permitted to stumble and fall, and to commit those abominations which, if they had not been thus judiciously left, would have been prevented; and that, as a consequence, they run into many sins which they might have avoided. Though we suppose, as will be farther considered in its proper place, that it is not in a man’s own power, as destitute of the grace of God, to bring himself into a regenerated or converted state, yet we do not deny that men might, in the right use of the gifts of nature, avoid many sins which they who are said to be blinded and hardened, especially where they are not prevented by the grace of God, run into, to the increase of their guilt and misery. But God may, without any impeachment of his providence, deny his grace to those whom he has not chosen to eternal life. He might, had he pleased, have denied it to the whole world; and much more to those who have not improved the common grace which they received, but have, through the wickedness of their nature, proceeded from one degree of sin to another.

There is another scripture, which some suppose we understand in such a sense as also gives occasion of prejudice to many against the doctrine we are maintaining: ‘For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.’<sup>z</sup> The meaning of this is, that God suffered those to be deluded who in the following verse are represented as ‘not receiving the love of the truth.’ The meaning is not that God was the author of these delusions, or deceived them by a false representation of things to them, or by exciting or inclining them to adhere to the suggestions of those who lie in wait to deceive; but the meaning is, that as he did not design to give them grace under the means of grace, or to enable them to receive the truth in the love of it, which he was not obliged to do to any, much less to those who rebelled against the light which had been already given them, they became, through the blindness of their own minds, an easy prey to those who endeavoured to ensnare or delude them. The decree of God respects only his denying preventing grace to those who, through the corruption of their own nature, took occasion to run greater lengths in their apostacy from and rebellion against God. As to the phrase ‘God shall send them strong delusions,’ it respects only his will to permit delusion and not his design to delude them.

There is another scripture to the same purpose: ‘So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust, and they walked in their own counsels.’<sup>a</sup> The meaning of this is,

that God left them to themselves; and then lust, or the corrupt habits of sin which they had acquired, conceived, and, as the apostle James says, 'brought forth sin,'<sup>b</sup> or greater acts of sin, which exposed them to a greater degree of condemnation. All this is to be resolved into God's permissive will or purpose to leave man, in his fallen state, to himself. This he might do, without giving occasion to any to say, on the one hand, that he is the author of sin, or, on the other, that he deals injuriously with the sinful creature.

We may add our Saviour's words concerning the Jews: 'Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.'<sup>c</sup> The sense which they who misrepresent our doctrine suppose we put upon these words, and which they conclude to be the only one consistent with the argument we are maintaining, is, that the unbelief which the Jews are charged with, was principally, if not altogether, resolved into God's eternal purpose, to blind their eyes, and harden their hearts,—that is, by some positive act, as a cause producing this effect, that they should not be converted and saved, that so his decree to condemn them might take effect. It is no wonder to find persons prejudiced against our doctrine, when set in such a light. But as this is very remote from the explanation we have given of it, so our Saviour's design, in the text in question, is to give an account why those miracles, which he wrought before the Jews, were ineffectual for their conviction. The more immediate cause which he assigns was the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts: they had shut their eyes against the light, and, through the corruption of their nature, had hardened their own hearts. As to what God is said to have done, in a judicial way, that he 'hath hardened their hearts,' it imports nothing else but his leaving them to the hardness of their own hearts, or denying them heart-softening grace, which would have been an effectual remedy against it. And may not God deny his grace to sinners, without being charged as the author of sin, or without the blame of it being devolved on him, and not on themselves? And, as this judicial act of providence cannot but be the result of an eternal purpose, is there any thing in his decree, which reflects on his perfections, any more than there is in the execution of it?

There is still another scripture on this subject: 'The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.'<sup>d</sup> Our opponents infer, that the doctrine of reprobation, which they suppose to be founded on a perverse sense of this text, includes a divine purpose to make man to condemn him. They conclude that we understand it in that sense; and they proceed a little farther, and pretend that we infer from it, that God made men wicked, or that he made them wicked for his glory, as if he had need of sinful man for that end. I should never have thought that so vile a consequence could be drawn from this doctrine, if the learned writer before mentioned had not told the world that we infer this from it.<sup>e</sup> To give countenance to his suggestion, he quotes a passage out of Dr. Twiss;<sup>f</sup> whose words are: "That all, besides the elect, God hath ordained to bring them forth into the world in their corrupt mass, and to permit them to themselves, to go on in their own ways, and so finally to persevere in sin; and, lastly, to damn them for their sin, for the manifestation of the glory of his justice on them." I am not ashamed to own my very great esteem of this excellently learned and pious writer, who was as considerable for that part of learning which his works discover him to have been conversant in, as most in his day. Yet, I cannot think myself obliged, in every respect, to explain this doctrine as he does. Dr. Whitby, too, knew very well, that if such an inference as that we have been speaking of, were to be deduced from the writings of any who maintain the doctrine of reprobation, it must be from one who follows the supralapsarian way of explaining it. The passage quoted by him, likewise,—which it may be, was a little unguarded,—seems to bid as fair for it as any other he could have found out. Yet, any one who reads the passage without prejudice, especially if he compare it with its context, would not

<sup>b</sup> James i. 15.  
&c. page 10.

<sup>c</sup> John xii. 39, 40.

<sup>d</sup> Prov. xvi. 4.

<sup>e</sup> See Whitby's Discourse,

<sup>f</sup> See his Riches of God's love against Hord. Part II. page 50.



suppose that any thing is intended which gives the least ground to conclude that God made men wicked for the manifestation of his justice. The most obnoxious part of the quotation is, 'that God ordained to bring forth into the world the non-elect, in their corrupt mass;' the meaning of which is, that persons who are every day born into the world, are the seed of corrupt and fallen man, and so have the habits of sin propagated with their nature,—a doctrine which many other divines have endeavoured to maintain. What my sentiments are concerning it, I choose to insist on rather under a following Answer; when we shall be led to speak of the doctrine of original sin, and of that corruption of nature which is the consequence of it. Passing this by, there is nothing in what remains of the quotation but what is very defensible, and far from making God the author of sin. All Dr. Twiss says concerning the providence of God relating to this matter, is, that he permits or leaves men to themselves; and he supposes them finally to persevere in sin, without which they cannot be liable to condemnation, or the display which will be made in it of the justice of God. If the author who brings the quotation had duly considered the words immediately before, he might have seen reason to save himself the trouble of making his reflection upon it; for Dr. Twiss, though a supralapsarian, says, "He reckons that controversy, relating to the order of God's decrees, to be merely *apex logicus*," as he calls it, '*a logical nicety*;' and he adds, that "his opinion about it is well known, namely, that God doth not ordain any man to damnation, before the consideration of sin." A few lines after, he says, "God of his mere pleasure created all, but of his mere pleasure he damneth none. But every one that is damned, is damned for his sin, and that wilfully committed, and contumaciously continued in by them that come to ripe years." Now if nothing more than this is intended by the doctrine of reprobation, it ought not to be misrepresented as it is, with a design to cast an odium upon it. But to return to the scripture under consideration—when God is said to have 'made the wicked for the day of evil,' the meaning is not that man's condemnation was the end designed by God in creating him. There are some other ideas which intervene between God's purpose to create and his purpose to condemn him. Man must be considered, not merely as a creature, but as a sinner. Now, as God did not create man that he might sin, he could not be said to create him that he might condemn him. Accordingly, the sense which some give of this text, is, that God 'made all things for himself,' that is, for his own glory. But as some will be ready to object, that God will have no glory from the wicked, who oppose his name and interest in the world, the answer is, that though he shall have no glory from them as a Saviour, he will, notwithstanding, be glorified in them as a Judge. His judicial act, though it be deferred for a time, while his long-suffering waits upon them, shall fall heavily on them in the day of evil. But this is very remote from the supposition, that God made man to condemn him. There is also a sense given of the text by some who are on the other side of the question, which seems equally probable, or agreeable to the mind of the Holy Ghost, and is not in the least subversive of the doctrine we are maintaining; it is, that "the Lord disposeth all things throughout the world, to serve such ends as he thinks fit to design, which they cannot refuse to comply withal; for if any men be so wicked as to oppose his will, he will not lose their service, but, when he brings a public calamity upon a country, employ them to be the executioners of his wrath. Of this there was a remarkable instance in the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Roman soldiers, whom our Saviour used to punish his crucifiers; not that they undertook that war out of any design or desire to do our blessed Saviour right, but out of an ambition to enslave the world. Yet God made use of them for another design, as public executioners, by whom he punished the ungodly."<sup>g</sup> So the Assyrian is said, to be 'the rod of God's anger,'<sup>h</sup> and to be 'sent against the people of Israel, to lead them captive,' and therein 'to tread them down, like the mire in the streets.'<sup>i</sup> As to what concerns the purpose of God, on which these

<sup>g</sup> See Bishop Patrick in loc.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. x. 5, 6.

<sup>i</sup> This agrees with the sense given of it by Grot. in loc. and Whitby in his Discourse, &c. page 11: and it agrees very well with the sense of the Hebrew words, *פעל למענהו* which do not so much signify to make, as to dispose and adapt

judicial proceedings depend, this is to be judged of by its execution ; for the one is evidently to be inferred from the other. And this is the sense in which, as we have repeatedly stated, we understand the doctrine of reprobation.

*Absurd Consequences of denying the Doctrine of Election.*

We have thus endeavoured to prove the doctrine of election and reprobation ; and have defended it from the reproaches and misrepresentations cast upon it, by considering it, not only as agreeable to the divine perfections, but as founded on scripture. We shall now proceed to inquire, whether the contrary doctrine, as defended by some, be not derogatory to the divine perfections, and therefore do not contain greater absurdities ; or, if expressions of detestation were a sufficient argument to set it aside, whether we have not as much reason to testify our dislike against it, as our opponents have against the doctrine we are maintaining. Our doctrine is charged with representing God as severe and cruel to his creatures, because, as is alleged, it is inconsistent with his goodness to suppose that he leaves any to themselves in their fallen state so as not to give them the means of grace, when he knew that, being destitute of it, they could not believe, and so, pursuant to his eternal purpose, would fall short of salvation. But can God's leaving men to themselves be said to be inconsistent with his goodness, any more than his other displays of vindictive justice ? If our opponents suppose that it is, we might easily retort the argument upon them. They will not assert that the whole race of fallen man shall be saved ; and, if so, must we not suppose that God certainly foreknew this, otherwise where is his infinite understanding ? and if he knew that this would be the consequence of their being born, and living in the world, where is his goodness in bringing them into it ? It may be said, that they had a free-will to choose what is good, and so had a power to attain salvation ; so that their not attaining it, is owing wholly to themselves. But suppose this, without entering at present on the subject of free-will, were taken for granted, it must be farther inquired, whether our opponents will allow that God foreknew that men would abuse this freedom of will, or power to make themselves holy or happy ; and, if so, could he not have prevented this ? Did he make a will which he could not govern or restrain ? Could he not have prevented the sin which he knew they would commit ? And if he could, why did he not do it, and thereby prevent their ruin, which he knew would be the consequence ? If men are disposed to find fault with the divine dispensation, it is no difficult matter to invent some methods of reasoning to cast reflections on it. Indeed, the objection in question is not so much against God's foreordaining what comes to pass, as it is a spurning at his judicial hand, and a finding fault with the equity of his proceedings, when he takes vengeance on sinners for their iniquities, or a charging of severity on God because all mankind are not the objects of his goodness, and, consequently, not elected to eternal life.

But, passing this, we shall proceed to consider how, in several instances, the methods used to oppose the doctrine which we are maintaining, are attended with many absurd consequences, derogatory to the divine perfections, and illustrative of the unreasonableness of our opponents.

1. A denial of the doctrine of election represents God as undetermined or unresolved what to do. This is the plain sense of their asserting that he has not foreordained whatever comes to pass. But to suppose him destitute of any determination, is directly contrary to his wisdom and sovereignty ; and would argue that there are some excellencies and perfections belonging to intelligent creatures, which are to be denied to him who is a God of infinite perfection. Our opponents, however, may, on the other hand, suppose that every thing which comes to pass is determined by him, and that, notwithstanding his determinations, as they respect the actions of intelligent creatures, are not certain and preeminent, but such as may be disannulled or rendered ineffectual, the divine measures being taken from



the uncertain determinations of man's will. But this is, in effect, to say that they are not determined by God. An uncertain determination, or a conditional purpose, cannot properly be called a determination. Thus for God to determine that he who believes shall be saved, without resolving to give that faith which is necessary to salvation, is, in effect, not to determine that any shall be saved. For, as our opponents suppose, that it is left to man's free-will to believe or not, and as they generally explain liberty as implying that a person might, had he pleased, have done the contrary to that which he is said to do freely, it follows, that all mankind might not have believed and repented, and consequently that they might have missed salvation; and then the purpose of God relating to their being saved, is the same as though he had been undetermined on the subject. If, on the contrary, they suppose that, to prevent this disappointment, God overrules the free actions of men, in order to the accomplishment of his own purpose, they give up their own cause, and allow us all that we contend for. This, however, they are not disposed to do; so that we cannot see how the independency of the divine will can be defended by them, consistently with their method of opposing our doctrine. If it be supposed, as an expedient against this absurd consequence of their views, that God foreknew what his creatures would do, that his determinations were the result of his foreknowledge, and consequently that the event is as certain as the divine foreknowledge, all of them will not concur in the supposition. Many are sensible that it is as hard to prove that God foreknew what must certainly come to pass, without inferring the inevitable necessity of things, as it is to assert that he willed or determined them, so as to render them eventually necessary. If they suppose that God foreknew what his creatures would do, and, particularly, that they would convert themselves, and improve the liberty of their will so as to render themselves objects fit for divine grace, without supposing that he determined to exert that power and grace which was necessary to their doing so, this is to exclude his providence from having a hand in the government of the world, or to assert that his determinations respect rather what others will do, than what he will enable them to do. Now this also appears to be inconsistent with the divine perfections.

2. There are some things, in their method of reasoning, which seem to infer a mutability in God's purpose; and this is the same thing as to suppose, that he had no purpose at all relating to the event of things. In opposing the doctrine of election, they refer to such scriptures as that in which it is said that 'God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth;' <sup>k</sup> and they suppose the act of the divine will here spoken of to apply to every individual, even to those who shall not be saved, or come to the knowledge of the truth. They in like manner understand our Saviour's words, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,' <sup>l</sup> as implying, that God purposed to save them, but was obliged afterwards, by the perverseness of their actions, to change his purpose. Now what is this, but to assert him to be dependent and mutable?

3. They who suppose that salvation is not to be resolved into the power and will of God, must ascribe it to the will of man, and say that by this we determine ourselves to perform those duties which render us the objects of divine mercy. On this principle, the apostle's statement, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy,' <sup>m</sup> would hardly be intelligible, or a defensible proposition. And when it is said, 'We love him, because he first loved us,' <sup>n</sup> the proposition ought to be inverted; and it should rather be said, 'He loved us, because we first loved him.' And that humbling question, which the apostle proposes, 'Who maketh thee to differ?' <sup>o</sup> should be answered, as one proudly did, 'I make myself to differ.'

4. The doctrine of discriminating grace cannot well be maintained, without asserting a discrimination in God's purpose relating to it, which is what we call election. If this be denied, there would not be so great a foundation for admiration

or thankfulness, as there is,—or for any to say, as one of Christ's disciples did, speaking the sense of all the rest, 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'<sup>p</sup> Nor is there so great an inducement to humility, as what will arise from the firm belief, that, when no eye pitied the poor, helpless, and miserable sinner, he was singled out of a ruined and undone world, among that remnant whom God first designed for glory, and then brought to it.

*Arguments for the opposite Doctrine to that of Election examined.*

We shall now consider those methods of reasoning, by which the doctrine contrary to that of election is defended, and inquire into the sense of those scriptures which are generally appealed to in its support, and shall endeavour to make it appear, that they may be explained in a different way, and one more consistent with the divine perfections. It is plain, that the main design of those who oppose the doctrine of election, is to advance the goodness of God. And as all mankind cannot be said to be equally partakers of the effects of this goodness, inasmuch as all shall not be saved, they suppose that God has put all mankind into a salvable state,—that as the gospel-overture is universal, so God's purpose to save includes all to whom it is made,—that the event, and consequently the efficacy of the divine purpose relating to it, depends on the will of man,—and that, in order that there may be no obstruction which may hinder this design from taking effect, God has given man a power to yield obedience to his law, which, though it be not altogether so perfect as it was at first, but is somewhat weakened by the fall, yet is sufficient to answer the end and design of the gospel, that is, to bring him to salvation, if he will,—so that, though there be not an universal salvation, there is a determination in God to save all upon this condition. How far this doctrine is inconsistent with the divine perfections, has been already considered. But we are farther to inquire, whether there be any foundation for it in scripture, and what is the sense of some texts which are often brought in its defence.

One text referred to is those words of the apostle, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.'<sup>q</sup> Another scripture, to the same purpose is, 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'<sup>r</sup> Several others also are quoted, whence they argue the universality of the divine purpose relating to the salvation of mankind, or that none are rejected or excluded from it by any act of God's will, and consequently that the doctrine of election and reprobation is to be exploded. Now, that the sense of these scriptures cannot be, that God designed that all men should be eventually saved or come to the knowledge of the truth, so that none of them should perish, is evident from many other scriptures which, as will doubtless be allowed by all, speak of the destruction of ungodly men. The two scriptures cannot have such a meaning as that God purposed or determined what shall never come to pass; for this, as was formerly observed, is inconsistent with the glory of his wisdom and sovereignty. But they are to be understood with those limitations which the word 'all,' which refers to the persons mentioned as designed to be saved, is subject to in other scriptures. This will be more particularly considered when, under a following answer,<sup>s</sup> we treat of universal and particular redemption.—We need only observe at present, for setting these scriptures in a true light, that the word 'all' is often taken for all sorts of men or things. Thus it is said, that 'of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark,'<sup>t</sup> that is, all the species of living creatures, not every individual. So,<sup>u</sup> in the vision which Peter saw of the sheet let down from heaven, it is said, 'there were all manner of four-footed beasts,'<sup>x</sup> &c. Again, it is said concerning our Saviour, that 'he went about, healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people;'<sup>y</sup> and elsewhere God promises that 'he will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh,'<sup>z</sup> that is, upon persons of all ages and conditions, young and old.

<sup>p</sup> John xiv. 22.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 9.

<sup>s</sup> See Quest. xlv.

<sup>t</sup> Gen. vii. 8, 9.

<sup>u</sup> Acts x. 12.

<sup>x</sup> The words are *παντα τετραποδα*, that is, 'all four-footed beasts.'

<sup>y</sup> Matt. ix. 23. The words are, *θεραπεύων παναν νόσον και παναν μαλακίαν*, 'every sickness, and every disease;' and the same words are translated in Matt. ix. 35.

<sup>z</sup> Acts ii. 17.



There are many instances of a similar nature in scripture, which justify this sense of the word 'all.' From the context it seems plain, that the word is to be thus understood in the former of the scriptures now in question. While the apostle says, 'God will have all men to be saved,' he exhorts that 'prayer and supplication should be made for all men,'<sup>a</sup> that is, for men of all characters and conditions in the world, and, in particular, 'for kings, and all that are in authority.' He resolves a matter in dispute among them, whether those kings who were tyrants and oppressors ought to be prayed for, when he tells them that all sorts of men are to be prayed for; and the reason which he assigns for his exhortation is, that 'God will have all men,' that is, all sorts of men, 'to be saved.' Moreover, they whom God will save, are said to be such as 'shall come,' that is, as he will bring, 'to the knowledge of the truth.' Now, it is certain that God never designed that every individual should come to the knowledge of the truth; for, if he did, his purpose is not fulfilled, or his providence runs counter to it, since all individuals of mankind have not the gospel. Hence, as God did not purpose that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth, the words, 'Who will have all men to be saved,' are not to be understood in any other sense, than as signifying all sorts of men. Nor can it well be proved, whatever may be attempted in the way of proof, that the words following, which speak of Christ being 'a Mediator between God and men,' mean that he performs this office for every individual man, even for those that shall not be saved; for then, as will be further considered in its proper place, the mediatorial office would be executed in vain for a great part of them. We must conclude, therefore, that, in the former of the scriptures under consideration, nothing else is intended, but that God determined to give saving grace to all sorts of men.—As for the latter, in which the apostle Peter says that 'God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,' the word 'all' is expressly limited in the context, as referring to those only who are elect and faithful. Hence he says, including himself among them, that 'the Lord is long-suffering to usward.' Now, if we observe the character which, in the beginning of both his epistles, he gives of the church to which he writes,<sup>b</sup> it is as great as is given of any in scripture. They are also distinguished from those profane 'scoffers, who walked after their own lusts,' and from other ungodly men, whose perdition he speaks of, as what would befall them in the dissolution of the world by fire in the day of judgment. They are not only described as 'elect unto obedience,' and as having obtained 'like precious faith' with the apostles; but they were such as God would 'keep, through faith, unto salvation.' The apostle might well, therefore, say concerning them, that God determined that none of them should perish, without, in saying so, advancing anything inconsistent with the doctrine we are maintaining. It is objected, however, that the apostle speaks of God, as willing that 'all should come to repentance;' that therefore the persons of whom he speaks are distinguished from that part of the church who had 'obtained like precious faith,' and were included among those whom he, in both epistles, describes as not in a state of salvation; that the word 'all' in this text is, in consequence, not subject to the limitation before-mentioned, but must mean all the world; and that, therefore, the meaning of what he states is, that God is not willing that any of mankind should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the design, according to the apostle's account, of God's deferring the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, and so exercising long-suffering towards the world in general, is not that he should bring them all to repentance; for to suppose the apostle as stating this, would be to represent him as stating a thing which he knew should never come to pass. The end of God's patience toward the world in general is, that all whom he designed to bring to repentance, or who were chosen to it, as well as to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, should be brought to it.

There are other arguments which our opponents bring in defence of their sense of the doctrine of election,—that the divine purpose is not peremptory, determinate, and unchangeable, and such as infers the salvation of those who are its objects. These arguments are founded on those scriptures which, as they apprehend, ascribe a kind

a 1 Tim. ii. 1.      b These, as he says in ver. 1. of this chapter, were directed to the same persons.

of disappointment to God. One scripture is that in which God says concerning his vineyard, that is, the church of the Jews, 'Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?'<sup>c</sup> Another text is our Saviour's words, that 'he sought fruit on the fig-tree,'<sup>d</sup> meaning the church of the Jews in his day, 'but found none.' A third is that in which our Lord says, concerning Jerusalem, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.'<sup>e</sup> From these scriptures they conclude, that God's purpose, or design of grace, may be defeated. These and many other scriptures, not unlike them, they say, are inconsistent with the doctrine, that the purpose of election ascertains the event, that is, the salvation of those who are chosen to eternal life. Let us particularly consider the sense of the texts.—As to the first of them, in which God says, by the prophet, 'What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?' he condescends to speak of himself after the manner of men, as he often does in scripture, and is said to look for what might reasonably have been expected, as the consequence of all the means of grace, which he had vouchsafed to them. The reasonableness of the thing is called his looking for it; as if he had said, 'It might have been expected, from the nature of the thing, that they who had been laid under such obligations, should express some gratitude for them, and so have brought forth some fruit to the glory of God.' Those words which seem to attribute disappointment to him, 'I looked,' &c. signify nothing else but the ingratitude of the people, that they did not walk agreeably to the obligations they were under. We are not to understand that God was really disappointed; for to suppose this would militate against his omniscience. He knew, before he laid these obligations on them, what their behaviour would be. Had he had eyes of flesh, or seen as man seeth, their behaviour would have tended to disappoint him; but there is no disappointment in the divine mind, though the sin reproved in the people be the same as though it had had a tendency to defeat the divine purpose, or disappoint his expectation.—As for that scripture in which it is said, that Christ 'sought fruit on the fig-tree, but found none,' it is to be explained in the same way. 'He sought fruit,' that is, fruit might reasonably have been expected; 'but he found none,' that is, they did not act agreeably to the means of grace they enjoyed. Neither this, nor the other scripture, does in the least argue, that the purpose of God was not concerned about the event, or that he did not know what it would be. As his providential dispensation gives us ground to conclude, that he determined to leave the parties to themselves; so he knew beforehand that his doing so would, through the corruption of their nature, issue in their unfruitfulness. If he did not foreknow this, he is not omniscient. Hence, neither of these scriptures has the least tendency to overthrow the doctrine of the certainty and peremptoriness of the divine purpose.—As to what our Saviour says concerning his willingness to have gathered Jerusalem, 'as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not,' it may be taken, without the least absurdity, as referring to the end and design of his ministry among them; and it is as if he had said, 'Your nation shall be broken, and you scattered, as a punishment inflicted on you for your iniquities; and this destruction would have been prevented, had you believed in me.' Hence, all that can be inferred is, that Christ's ministry and doctrine were attended with such convincing evidence, being confirmed by so many undoubted miracles, that their unbelief was not only charged on them as a crime, but was the occasion of their ruin, or, as is said in the following words, of their 'house being left unto them desolate.' This ruin might have been prevented, by their making a right improvement of that common grace which they had. For though it is not in man's power, without the special influences of divine grace, to believe to the saving of the soul; yet I know no one who denies that it is in his power to do more good, and avoid more evil, than he does, or so far to attend to the preaching of the gospel, as not to oppose it with such malice and envy as the Jews did. Now, had the Jews paid such a deference to Christ's



ministry as they were capable of rendering, they would not have been exposed to those judgments which afterwards befell them. It is one thing to say, that men, by improving common grace, can attain salvation; and another thing to conclude, that they might thereby have escaped temporal judgments. Hence, if it be inquired, what was God's intention in giving them the gospel? the answer is very plain: It was not that by means of it he might bring them all into a state of salvation, for then it would have taken effect; but it was, as appears by the event, to bring those who should be saved among them to that salvation, and to let others know, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, that God had a right to their obedience, and therefore, that the message which the Redeemer brought to them, ought to have met with a better reception from them than it did. If it be farther inquired, Whether, provided they had believed, their ruin would have been prevented? we reply, that the affirmative is an undoubted consequence from our Saviour's words. Yet it does not follow, that it was a matter of uncertainty with God, whether they should believe or not. It is one thing to say, that he would not have punished them, unless they rejected our Saviour; and another thing to suppose that he could not well determine whether they would reject him or not. The purpose of God must be considered as agreeing with the event of things, and the design of Christ's ministry as being what it really was; yet he might, notwithstanding, take occasion to charge the Jews' destruction upon their own obstinacy.—There are many other scriptures which our opponents bring for the same purpose as those we have now considered. These I shall pass over; because the sense they give of them differs not much from that in which they understand the others, and their reasoning from them, in opposition to our doctrine, is the same, and may receive the same answer.

I cannot but observe, however, that while, from some scriptures, they attribute disappointment to God, they represent him, from others, as wishing, but in vain, that events had happened otherwise, and as being grieved with disappointment. So they understand these words, 'O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries;'<sup>f</sup> and these, 'If,' or 'O that thou hadst known, even thou at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.'<sup>g</sup> Now, the sense of these and similar scriptures is no more than this, not that God can be said to wish for a thing which cannot be attained, but that the thing which the persons spoken of refused to perform, was in itself most desirable, or a matter to be wished for. When our Saviour laments over Jerusalem, as apprehending their destruction to be near, whether his words are to be considered as a wish that it had been otherwise, or as an intimation that if they had known the things of their peace their destruction would not have ensued, they are to be understood only as a representation of the deplorableness of the Jews' condition, which, with a tenderness of human compassion, he could not speak of without tears. Yet we are not to suppose that this mode of expression is applicable to the divine will. Hence, when the misery of the Jews is thus set forth, we are not to strain the sense of words taken from human modes of speaking, so far as to suppose that the judicial acts of God, in punishing a sinful people, are not the execution of a corresponding purpose. Again, when the Spirit is said to be 'grieved'<sup>h</sup> or 'resisted,'<sup>i</sup> nothing else is intended, but that men act in such a way, as that, had the Spirit of God been subject to human passions, their conduct would have been matter of grief to him. But far be it from us to suppose that the divine nature is liable to grief, or that any disappointment which has a tendency to excite this passion in men, can attend God's purposes. And when the Holy Spirit is said to be resisted, it is not meant that his will, or design, can be rendered ineffectual, but it implies only that men oppose what the Spirit communicated by the prophets, or in his word. This a person may do; and yet it may be truly said, that 'the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.'<sup>k</sup>

f Psal. lxxxi. 13, 14.  
i Acts vii. 51.

g Luke xix. 42.  
k Psal. xxxiii. 11.

h Eph. iv. 30.

*Objections to the Doctrine of Election examined.*

We shall proceed to consider several objections which are made against the doctrine we have endeavoured to maintain, and what reply may be given to them. Some have been occasionally mentioned under several foregoing heads; but there are others which require a distinct reply.

1. One objection is, that the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation was altogether unknown by the Fathers in the three first centuries, and that it was first brought into the Christian world by Augustin; before whose time, the only account we have of it, is, that God, foreknowing who would live piously, or believe and persevere to the end, accordingly predestinated them to eternal life, or determined to pass them by, and so is said to have rejected them.<sup>1</sup> This objection, were it literally true, cannot have any tendency to overthrow this doctrine, in the opinion of those who, on the one hand, depend not on the credit of Augustin as defending it, nor, on the other, are staggered by the opposition made to it by some of the Fathers who lived before his time. We might, therefore, have passed it by, without making any reply to it. Yet as it contains a kind of insult or boast which will have its weight with some, it may be expected that a few things should be said in answer to it. Now, we will not deny that the Fathers before the Pelagian heresy was broached, expressed themselves, in many parts of their writings, in so lax and unguarded a manner, concerning the doctrines of predestination, free-will, and grace, that, had they lived after those doctrines began to be publicly contested, one would have thought that they had verged too much towards Pelagius' side. But, as these doctrines were not matter of controversy in those ages, it is no wonder to find them less cautious in their modes of expressing themselves, than they might otherwise have been. It is a just observation, which one<sup>m</sup> makes on this subject, that they had to do with the Manichees, and with some of the heathen, who supposed that men sinned by a fatal necessity of nature. There was, in those days, no wicked action committed in the world but some were ready to excuse it, from the impotency of human nature, or its propensity to sin, which rendered the wicked action, as they supposed, unavoidable. Others, on the same ground, took occasion even to charge God with being the author of sin. Now it is very probable, that the Fathers in those ages were afraid of giving countenance to this vile opinion, and therefore were less on their guard, in some respects, than they would have been, had they stood opposed to Pelagius or his followers. Indeed, Augustin himself, before he took occasion to inquire more diligently into the Pelagian controversy, used the same method of expressing his sentiments about the power of nature or the grace of God, as some others of the Fathers had done, and concluded that faith was in our power, as well as a duty incumbent on us. But he afterwards, as the result of more mature deliberation,<sup>n</sup> retracted such modes of speaking. Yet though he expressed himself in a different way from the Fathers before him, he often takes occasion, from some passages which he purposely refers to in their writings, to vindicate them, as holding the same faith, though not always using the same phrases. After he had thus defended Cyprian and Ambrose, he puts a very charitable construction on their unguarded way of expressing themselves, and says that it arose from their not having any occasion to engage in that controversy which was on foot in his day.<sup>o</sup> The same might be said of Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Chrysostom, and several others; whom some modern writers defend from the charge of favouring the Pelagian scheme, by referring to some places in their writings in which, either directly or by tantamount expressions, they

1 See Whitby of Election, chap. 5. Limborch Amic. Collat. page 242.

m Vid. Sixt. Senens. Bibliothec. Lib. v. Annotat. 101. Annotavit quidam Chrysostomum inter dum naturæ nostræ vires plus æquo extulisse ex contentione discipandi cum Manichæis et Gentilibus, qui hominem asserebant, vel natura malum vel fati violentia ad peccandum compelli.

n Vid. Aug. Retract. i. cap. 25.

o Vid. Aug. de Prædest. Sanct. cap. 14. Quid igitur opus est, ut eorum scrutemur opuscula, qui prius quam ista hæresis oriretur, non bahuerunt necessitatem in hac difficili ad solvendum quæstione versari: quod proculdubio facerent, si respondere talibus cogerentur.



acknowledge that the salvation of men is owing to the grace of God, whereby all occasions of glorying are taken away from the creature.<sup>p</sup> The learned Vossius, though he acknowledges that the Fathers, before Augustin, expressed themselves in such a way as is represented in the objection, yet vindicates them from the charge of verging towards the Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian heresy; for he concludes, that when they speak of God's predestinating men to eternal life, on the foresight of good works, they intend only those good works which God would enable them to perform. This suggestion of his clears many of the expressions which they use, from the imputation cast upon them.<sup>q</sup> But if all these endeavours to show that the Fathers who lived before Augustin were not opposers of our doctrine, appear to be to no purpose, our faith in the truth of it will not be weakened. We suppose it to be founded on direct statements of scripture, and on several inferences plainly deduced from it; and therefore it does not need the suffrage of human testimony for its support. But if it be said, that such testimony is a very desirable thing, as doubtless it is, we might consider our doctrine as obtaining very much in and after Augustin's time, being examined and defended by very considerable numbers of men, who have transmitted it down to posterity, throughout the various ages of the church. Yet, as a judicious divine well observes,<sup>r</sup> by whomsoever it is defended or opposed, we lay no great stress on human authority. We shall therefore proceed to consider some other objections, which it will be more necessary for us to give a particular answer to.

2. To the doctrine that God's purpose ascertains all events, it is objected, that he has not so determined the bounds of the life of man, but that it may be lengthened or shortened by the intervention of second causes. This objection is nothing else but the applying of one branch of the controversy relating to the decrees of God, to a particular instance. It was very warmly debated in the Netherlands, towards the beginning of the last century.<sup>s</sup> It is of a popular form, and is adapted principally to give prejudice to those who are disposed to pass over or set aside some necessary distinctions which, if duly considered, would not only shorten the debate, but set the matter in a clearer light. We shall endeavour to state these distinctions, but shall first consider their method of reasoning on the subject, and the sense they give of some scriptures which, as they suppose, give countenance to the objection.

They argue that, if the term of life be immoveably fixed by God, it is a vain thing for any one to use those means which are necessary to preserve it,—that the skill of the physician, as well as the virtue of medicine, is altogether needless,—that the good advice which is often given to persons, to take heed that they do not shorten their lives by intemperance, will be to no purpose, for they may readily reply that they shall live their appointed time do what they will,—and what is still more absurd, that if a person attempt to lay violent hands upon himself, his attempt will be to no purpose, if God has determined that he shall live longer, and if he has determined that he shall die, the man is guilty of no crime, for he only fulfils the divine purpose. They add that our doctrine renders all our supplications to God to preserve our lives, or to restore us from sickness, when we are in danger of death, needless; and that our conduct in making such supplications is a practical denial of the argument we maintain; for what is it, they say, but to suppose that the bounds of life are not unalterably fixed? As to the countenance which they suppose scripture gives to their objection, they refer us to those places in which the life of man is said to be lengthened or shortened. Thus there are promises of 'long life' given to the righteous, who love God, and keep his commandments.<sup>t</sup> Solomon says expressly, 'The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened;'<sup>u</sup> and elsewhere he speaks of the wicked dying be-

<sup>p</sup> Vid. Forbes. Instruct. Historico-Theol. Lib. viii. cap. 28. § 16, &c. and Joh. Jacobi Hottingeri, Fata Doctrinæ de Prædestinat. Lib. i. § 35, &c.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. G. J. Vossii Hist. Pelag. Lib. vi. Thes. 8, 9, 10.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Calv. Instit. Lib. iii. cap. 22. § 1. Certior est hic Dei veritas, quam ut concutiat, clarior quam ut obruat hominum auctoritate.

<sup>s</sup> See the epistles that passed between Beverovicus, a physician at Dort, and several divines at that time, in Lib. de Term. vitæ.

<sup>t</sup> Exod. xx. 12. Deut. iv. 40. 1 Kings iii. 14.

<sup>u</sup> Prov. x. 27.

fore the time.’<sup>x</sup> The psalmist also says, that ‘bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.’<sup>y</sup> They refer also to that scripture in which Martha tells our Saviour, that ‘if he had been with her brother Lazarus,’ before his death, ‘he had not died.’<sup>z</sup> Either, say they, this contradicts the argument we are maintaining, or Martha was mistaken; and had she been so, our Saviour would have reproved her for asserting what was false. They add, moreover, that when the old world were destroyed in the deluge, and so died before their time, they might have prolonged their lives, had they repented in that space of time in which Noah as ‘a preacher of righteousness,’ gave them warning of the desolating judgment, and in which ‘Christ, by his Spirit’ in him, ‘preached to them,’ doubtless, as the apostle says,<sup>a</sup> with a design to bring them to repentance, and save them from destruction. And when Abraham pleaded with God in behalf of Sodom, God tells him, that ‘if he found but ten righteous persons in the city, he would spare it for their sake.’<sup>b</sup> But this, the objectors say, is inconsistent with his determination that they should all die by an untimely death, if the bounds of their lives had been fixed. Lastly, they refer to that scripture, in which God first told Hezekiah, that ‘he should die, and not live,’ and afterwards, that he would ‘add to his days fifteen years.’<sup>c</sup>

To prepare our way for a reply to this objection, let us consider that the side of the question which we are maintaining, is equally supported by express texts of scripture. Thus it is said, ‘His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.’<sup>d</sup> Nothing can be more express than this. Here the inspired writer speaks of a decree of God which respects all mankind, without exception, and sets forth his absolute sovereignty, and the irreversibleness of his purpose. The apostle Paul also, in reasoning with the Athenians concerning the decree and providence of God, in whom we live, move, and have our being, says, that ‘he hath determined the times before appointed, and fixed the bounds of their habitation.’<sup>e</sup> As God has placed men upon the earth, by his decree and providence, so he has determined not only the place where they should live, but the time of their continuance in the world. This was no new doctrine: for the heathen had been instructed in it by their *greek* philosophers. Hence the apostle speaks their opinion, especially that of the Stoics, about this matter.<sup>f</sup> When he mentions the times as determined, his words are to be understood, not of the seasons of the year, which God has fixed to return in their certain courses, but of the seasons appointed for every work, or for every occurrence of life, and, among the rest, for life itself, and for serving our generation. Accordingly, Solomon expressly says, ‘To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose: a time to be born, and a time to die.’<sup>g</sup> Several other scriptures might be brought to the same purpose, particularly those in which God has foretold the death of particular persons.<sup>h</sup> Moreover, if the providence of God is conversant about all the actions of men, and ‘the hairs of their head are all numbered,’<sup>i</sup> so that the smallest changes in life do not come by chance, but are subject to the divine control, certainly the time of life must be subjected to his providence. Hence, he is styled, ‘Our life, and the length of our days;’<sup>k</sup> and he must certainly be considered as the sovereign Arbiter of life. This doctrine none who own a providence, can with any shadow of reason gainsay; for it is agreeable not only to several scriptures, but to the very nature and perfections of God.

We return now to the arguments laid down against it, and the scriptures cited to give countenance to them. It is certain, that two contradictory propositions cannot be both true, in the same sense; and that the scriptures, which are exactly harmonious, as well as infallibly true, nowhere contradict themselves. Now let it be observed, that the bounds of life are twofold,—either such as men might have lived to, according to the common course of nature, if nothing had intervened to

x Eccles. vii. 17. y Psal. lv. 23. z John xi. 21. a 1 Pet. iii. 20. b Gen. xviii. 32.

c Isa. xxxviii. 1. compared with 5. d Job xiv. 5. e Acts xvii. 26.

Seneca de Consol. ad Marciam, cap. 20. Nemo nimis citò moritur, qui victurus diutius quam vixit non fuit, fixus est cuique terminus manebit semper ubi positus est, nec illum ulterius diligentia aut gratia promovebit. Et Cicero de Senect. Quod cuique temporis ad vivendum datum, eo debet contentus esse. Virg. Æn. X. Stat sua cuique dies. Serv. Fixum est tempus vitæ.

g Eccl. iii. 1, 2.

h 2 Sam. xii. 14. 1 Kings xiv. 12. Chap. xxii. 28.

k Deut. xxx. 20.

i Matt. x. 30.



ruin the constitution, or no disease or violent death had broken the thread of life before,—or that period during which God has ordained that men shall live, whether it be longer or shorter. The former respects the lengthening or shortening of life, by the influence of second causes. In this sense, we do not suppose that the term of life is immoveably fixed, but believe that in some it is longer, and in others shorter. It is certain, that, by intemperance, or other methods, men may shorten their days, or, by laying violent hands on themselves, not live the time that otherwise they would have done. But if we consider the overruling or disposing providence of God as conversant about this matter, there is nothing which happens without its concurrence. Persons who shorten their days by intemperance, do so by the permissive providence of God. Though he is not the author of their intemperance, yet he permits it, or determines not to hinder it. Hence, though he has fixed the bounds of life, which can neither be lengthened or shortened, yet, knowing what men will do, in a natural way, to shorten them, he determines that their conduct shall put an end to their lives. And when we read, in scripture, of God's 'delivering' him who dies a violent death, 'into his hands' who inflicts it,<sup>1</sup> God is not the author of the sin of the murderer. Yet providence is not wholly to be exempted from that action, so far as it is not sinful, but purely natural or the effect of power. And when such an occurrence is said to shorten the life of man, there is nothing inharmonious with God's having fixed the duration of it in his own purpose. We must consider also that his decree and providence respect the means, as well as the end, which are always inseparably connected, and equally subject to him.

We proceed to give a more particular answer to the arguments stated in the objection. —When it is said, that God's fixing the bounds of life renders all means for the preservation of it unnecessary, a false supposition is made, namely, that God does not ordain the means as well as the end. If God has determined that persons shall live, he has determined to give them the supports of life, and to prevent every thing that might tend to destroy it. If, on the other hand, he takes them away by a disease, he has ordained the disease as a means conducive to the end. If health is to be supported, or recovered, by means, and thereby life preserved, God has ordained that these means shall be used, as well as the end attained. As to persons shortening their lives by intemperance, the sin has a natural tendency to shorten life; so that, though God is not the author of the sin, he certainly knows beforehand what methods the sinner will take to hasten his end, and leaves him to himself. Though the sin is not from God, the punishment, which is the consequence of it, may truly be said to be from him, and therefore was determined by him. When the objectors farther say, that they who destroy their health, or lay violent hands on themselves, cannot be said to sin in so doing, because, provided God has determined this fatal event, they do that which tends to fulfil the divine will,—when they say this, they oppose our doctrine, without taking our words in the same sense in which it is maintained. It is well known, that the will of God is sometimes taken for his prescribed rule, which is the matter of our duty; and in this sense, we readily allow, that he who fulfils it cannot be said to sin. But the will of God is sometimes taken for his purpose to permit sin, or to give the sinner up to his own heart's lusts, to do that which he hates and is resolved to punish. In this sense, the sinner is said to do that which God would not have suffered him to do, had he willed the contrary. But it is a very groundless insinuation, to suppose that for this reason he is exempted from the guilt of sin.

Again, to say that God's fixing the bounds of life, is inconsistent with our praying that our lives may be prolonged, or that we may be delivered from sickness or death, when we are apprehensive that we are drawing nigh to it, is no just consequence. We do not pray that God would alter his purpose, when we desire any blessing of him; but suppose that his purpose is hid from us, and expect not to know it any otherwise than by the event. A person who prays to be delivered from sickness or death, is not to address the divine Majesty as one who presumptuously, and without ground, supposes that God has decreed that he shall immediately die, but as one who hopes, or who has no ground to disbelieve that he will make it

appear, by answering his prayer, that he has determined to spare his life. The secret purpose of God relating to the event of things, as it is secret, is to be no more a rule of duty, than if there had been no purpose. Yet it does not follow that the event is not determined by him.

As to those scriptures which seem to give countenance to the objection we are considering, they may, without the least absurdity, be understood consistently with other scriptures already quoted, which prove that God has fixed or determined the bounds of life.—As to those promises which God has made of a long life ‘to those that love him, and keep his commandments,’ the meaning of them is, that he will certainly bestow this blessing, either in kind or value, on those whose conversation is such as is described. This none can deny, who rightly understand the meaning of that scripture, ‘Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is,’ as well as of ‘that which is to come.’<sup>m</sup> But, so far as it affects the argument we are maintaining, we must consider that that efficacious grace whereby we are enabled to love God and keep his commandments, is as much his gift, and consequently the result of his purpose, as the blessing connected with it. Hence, if he has determined that we shall enjoy a long and happy life in this world, and to enable us to live a holy life,—if the end and the means are connected together, and both the objects of God’s purpose, it cannot justly be inferred that the event, relating to the lengthening or shortening of our lives, is not determined by him.—As to those scriptures which speak of the wicked ‘dying before their time,’ or ‘not living half their days,’ they are to be understood agreeably to the distinction formerly mentioned, between men’s dying sooner than they would have done according to the course of nature, or according to the concurrence of second causes, and their dying sooner than God had before determined. In the former sense it is literally true, that many do not live out half their days. But may not the sovereign Disposer of all things inflict a sudden and immediate death as the punishment of sin, without giving us reason to conclude that the event was not preconcerted, if we may so express it, or determined beforehand?—As to that other scripture, in which Martha tells our Saviour that if he had been with Lazarus when sick, ‘he had not died,’ she does not suppose that Christ’s being there would have frustrated the divine purpose; for then he would, doubtless, have reproved her for what she said. In fact, he did not come to visit him, because he knew that God had purposed that he should die, and be afterwards raised from the dead. This case, therefore, does not argue that God has not fixed the bounds or term of life.—Again, as to the destruction of the world in the flood, and that of Sodom by fire from heaven, we do not deny that they might have prolonged their lives had they repented. But, in that case, their repentance would have been as much determined by God, as their deliverance from the untimely death which befell them.—The last scripture mentioned, in which God, by the prophet Isaiah, tells Hezekiah that ‘he should die, and not live,’ notwithstanding which, fifteen years were added to his life, is very frequently insisted on by those who deny the unalterable decree of God relating to life and death, and is esteemed by them an unanswerable argument in support of their opinion. But, when God said, ‘Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live,’ he gave Hezekiah to understand that his disease was what we call mortal, that is, such as no skill of the physician or natural virtue of medicine could cure, and that therefore he must expect to die, unless God recovered him by a miracle. Hezekiah, doubtless, took the warning in this sense, otherwise it would have been a preposterous thing for him to have prayed for life; for he would then have offered an affront to God, by desiring him to change his purpose. But God designed by the warning to incite him to importunate prayer for life. Hence, when he says, ‘I will add to thy days fifteen years,’ the meaning is, ‘Though thou mightest before have expected death, my design in giving thee that intimation was, that thou shouldst pray for life, which might be given thee by a miracle; and now I will work a miracle, and fulfil what I before purposed in adding to thy life fifteen years.’

3. It is farther objected against the doctrine of election and reprobation, and



particularly against the immutability of God's purpose, that it tends to establish a fatal necessity of things, and overthrow that known distinction that there is between things, as necessary or contingent. The doctrine, it is alleged, implies that nothing in the whole series of causes and effects can happen otherwise than it does, and that God himself is confined to such a method of acting, that it is impossible for him to do the contrary. This, it is said, is nothing else but the Stoical doctrine of fate, applied to and defended by some scriptures; though it is contrary to others, which speak of the uncertainty of future events. Thus God speaks of the Jews turning from their iniquities, and of his bestowing pardoning mercy upon them in consequence, as an uncertain event: 'It may be that the house of Judah will bear all the evil, which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.'<sup>n</sup> So when, immediately before the captivity, God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to personate one who was removing his stuff or household goods, in order to signify to the Jews that the nation in general should soon remove to other habitations, when carried captive into Babylon, he says, 'It may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.'<sup>o</sup> And the prophet Zephaniah exhorts the people 'to seek righteousness and meekness;' and, as the consequence thereof, says, 'It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.'<sup>p</sup> The apostle also speaks of the uncertainty of the divine dispensations of grace, when he advises Timothy, 'in meekness, to instruct those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.'<sup>q</sup> This language, it is alleged, is directly contrary to the unalterable necessity of events, depending upon the divine purpose, according to the doctrine of election.

As to the former part of this objection, in which the doctrine is pretended to have taken its rise from, and to be agreeable to, that of the Stoics concerning fate and destiny, it will not be much to our purpose to inquire what was the opinion of that sect of philosophers concerning it. Indeed, it will be difficult to fix on such a view of that doctrine as will be agreed to by all. Some are of opinion, that many of the Stoics intended nothing else than that God's purposes are immutable, and that the dispensations of his providence are a necessary execution of them. It is understood also that when they speak of him as bound by the laws of fate, they mean, that he cannot act contrary to what himself has determined.<sup>r</sup> Had the Stoical doctrine been universally explained in this sense, it would not have done our opponents much service, to compare it with the doctrine of election; for it would only have proved the agreeableness of the doctrine of the immutability of God's purpose, relating to all events, to the light of nature, as some of the heathen were thereby instructed in it. But as this does not appear to be the sense of all the Stoics about the doctrine of fate, and as some of them understood it in the same sense as is represented in the objection, we cannot but oppose it, and assert the doctrine of election to be very remote from it. In answer to this part of the objection, we need only explain what we mean, when we maintain the necessity of events, as founded on the will of God. We are far from asserting that there is a necessary connection between second causes and their respective effects; for, as regards these, some effects are produced arbitrarily, by the will of intelligent creatures. When we call any thing a necessary cause, producing effects according to its own nature, we suppose that it is agreeable to the order or course of nature, which was fixed by God. All that we pretend to prove, is the dependence of things on the divine will, and the necessity of God's purposes taking effect. We say that what is arbitrary or contingent, or what might be or not be, as depending on or relating to second causes, is eventually necessary, as it is an accomplishment of the divine purpose. Hence, we always distinguish between things being contingent with respect to us, and their being so with respect to God. Accordingly, though the words, 'it may be,' or 'peradventure,' may be applied to the apparent event of things, they can never be applied to the fulfilling of the divine will.

<sup>n</sup> Jer. xxxvi. 3.<sup>o</sup> Ezek. xii. 3.<sup>p</sup> Zeph. ii. 3.<sup>q</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 25.<sup>r</sup> Vid. Senec. de Prov. cap. 5. August. de Civ. Dei, Lib. v. cap. 1. and 8. Lips. Phys. Stoic. Lib. i. Diss. 12.

As to the scripture's speaking concerning the uncertainty of future events, in those texts mentioned in the objection, these, and all others in which such a mode of speaking is used, may be explained, by distinguishing between what might reasonably have been expected to be the event of things, supposing men had not been given up to the blindness of their minds and the hardness of their hearts, to act below the dictates of reason, without consulting their own safety and happiness or expressing their gratitude to God, and what would be the real event of things, which God was not pleased to reveal, and which therefore was unknown to them. Thus, when the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel represented the repentance and reformation of Israel, as an uncertain event, and spoke of their forgiveness and their deliverance from captivity, connected with it, in these dubious terms, 'It may be they will consider and return, every man from his evil way,' their words imply that the event was what might have been reasonably expected by men, though it was no matter of uncertainty to the heart-searching God, who knoweth the end from the beginning, and perfectly foresees what will be the event of things, which, in various respects, are under the direction of his providence. Though it could hardly be thought by men, that such an admonition should be treated with such contempt, yet God knew how they would behave themselves. There was no peradventure with respect to his judgment of it. He knew that they would not repent; otherwise he would have inclined their wills, and effectually have persuaded them to exercise this grace, and thereby have prevented his expectation or determination from being disappointed or frustrated. It may, perhaps, be objected, that, according to this sense of the text, the prophet's message to the people would have been to no purpose, and his ministry among them exercised in vain; or that it was contrary to the wisdom and goodness of God to make this overture to them, when he knew it would not be complied with. But the great God is not bound to decline asserting his right to man's obedience, or requiring that which is a just debt to him, though he know that they will not comply with his demand. Indeed, this objection cannot be maintained without supposing, that, when the gospel is preached to man, the glory of the divine wisdom and goodness cannot be secured, unless we conclude either that God doth not know whether man will embrace it or not, which is contrary to his omniscience, or that he determines that all to whom the gospel is preached, shall embrace it, which is contrary to matter of fact. But there may be a medium between these, which vindicates the divine perfections: God may order that the gospel should be preached, and thereby assert his sovereignty, and unalienable right to their obedience. Accordingly, there may be a small remnant among them, in whom God designs that his message shall take effect. And will any one say, that because the goodness of God was not demonstrated to all, no glory was brought to that perfection? If it be farther said, that supposing there were some who turned from their evil ways, the captivity, which was threatened, was not thereby prevented, and therefore the promise relating to their deliverance was not accomplished; we reply, that as God did not give them ground to expect this blessing, unless repentance should be more universal than it really was, so he had various ways to testify his regard to those who should receive advantage by his message, for whose sake it was principally intended.

As for that scripture in which God advises his people to 'seek righteousness and meekness,' and in which, as the consequence of this, he says, 'It may be ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger;' the meaning is, that they who were enabled to exercise these graces, should either have some instances of temporal deliverance vouchsafed to them, or, if not, that they should have no reason to complain that the exercise of the graces was altogether in vain.

As for that scripture in which the apostle bids Timothy exhort those that oppose the gospel, 'if, peradventure, God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;' the meaning is, that it was uncertain to Timothy whether God would give this grace or not; and therefore he must preach the gospel, whatever should be the event thereof. Yet, it was no matter of uncertainty, with respect to God; who must be supposed to know what grace he designs to bestow. The event of things may be dubious to us, and yet be certain with respect to him.

4. Another objection against the doctrine of election and reprobation, is, that it



is altogether inconsistent with the preaching of the gospel. If God, it is said, has determined the final state of man, so that his purpose cannot be altered, it is a preposterous thing, not to say illusory, for grace to be offered to the chief of sinners. This must certainly argue, that it is possible to be attained by them. And since the overture is universal, we must conclude that God has put all mankind into a salvable state, and consequently not excluded any from salvation by his peremptory and unchangeable decree. To what purpose, it is asked, are the promises of the gospel held forth to all that sit under the sound of it, if it be impossible for them to attain the blessings promised in it? Or what regard could men be supposed to have to the promises, if they were not a declaration of God's purpose? On the other hand, it is added, the threatenings denounced would be as little regarded, as an expedient to deter men from sinning, if, according to this doctrine of election, their state were unalterably fixed by God.

That we may proceed with clearness in answering this objection, we shall first show what we mean by preaching the gospel. The gospel is nothing else but a declaration of God's revealed will and of our duty in obedience to it; and this gospel is to be made known,—particularly what relates to the salvation of men, and the way which God has ordained in order to their attaining it. Now when this salvation is said to be offered in the gospel, we intend nothing else, but that a declaration is made to sinners, that there are many invaluable privileges which Christ has purchased for all those whom God has purposed to save, and which he will in his own time and way apply to them. And as we cannot describe them by name, and no unregenerated person has ground to conclude that he is of that number, there is a farther declaration to be made, that God has inseparably connected this salvation to which he has chosen them, with faith and repentance and the exercise of all other graces. And as these are God's gift, and to be prayed for, and expected, in a diligent attendance on all his ordinances, so they are to be considered as the marks and evidences of men's being chosen to salvation. Without these evidences, it is certainly a vain and presumptuous thing for any one to pretend that he has a right to salvation, as the object of God's eternal election.—Again, no one who preaches the gospel, has any warrant from God to tell any individual that, whether he repents and believes or not, he shall be saved, or to direct his discourse to him as one who is chosen to salvation; much less to give the impenitent sinner occasion to conclude, that, though he obstinately and finally remain in a state of rebellion against God, he may still hope to be saved, because there is a number of mankind chosen to salvation. This is not to declare God's revealed will, but that which is directly contrary to it, and therefore not to preach the gospel. Hence, all who sit under the sound of the gospel, ought to look upon it as a declaration of God's design to save a part of mankind under its preaching, and among them the chief of sinners, which they have sufficient ground to conclude themselves to be. A door of hope is so far opened, that they have no reason to conclude that they are rejected, any more than that they are elected. While they wait on God's instituted means of grace, they have at least this encouragement, that, peradventure, they may be of the number of God's elect. And when they find in themselves that faith which is the evidence of their being so, and are enabled to make their calling and thereby their election sure, they may then determine their interest in, and lay claim to this privilege. As for the promises and threatenings, these are to be considered by unregenerated persons, without determining their right to the one, or falling under the other, as elected or rejected. That is a point which is still supposed to be a secret. They are, therefore, to regard the promise, as a declaration of God's purpose relating to the connection that there is between faith and salvation, and as an inducement to perform the one, in expectation of the other. As for the threatenings, though they determine the present state of impenitent sinners to be such that they are undone and miserable, they are not to be extended to those events which are hid in the purpose of God, so as to give any one ground to conclude that he is finally excluded from salvation; for final exclusion is inseparably connected only with final impenitency and unbelief.

5. It is farther objected, that the doctrine of election and reprobation is, in many instances, subversive of practical religion. It is alleged to be inconsistent with

the duty of prayer. For if God, it is said, has determined to save a person, he has no need to ask a blessing which is already granted; and if he has determined to reject him, his prayer will be in vain. It is farther supposed to lead to presumption on the one hand, or to despair on the other,—election to presumption, reprobation to despair. It is alleged, also, to lead to licentiousness, or to be inconsistent with our using endeavours that we may be saved. For to what purpose, it is asked, do persons strive to enter in at the strait gate, when all their endeavours will be ineffectual, if they are not elected? or to what purpose do they use any endeavours to escape the wrath of God due to sin, if they are appointed to wrath, and so must necessarily perish?

This objection is, beyond measure, shocking. It is no wonder that a doctrine which is supposed to have such consequences attending it, is treated with the utmost degree of detestation. But as the greatest part of the objections against it are mere misrepresentations, it is no difficult matter to reply to them, to the conviction of those who are disposed to judge impartially of the matter in controversy. We shall proceed to reply to the several branches of this objection.

As to what concerns the duty of prayer, when we are engaged in it, we are not to suppose that we are to deal with God in such a way as when we have to do with men, whom we suppose to be undetermined, and who may be moved by entreaties to alter their present resolutions, and to give us what we ask. To suppose this would be to conceive of God as altogether such a one as ourselves. Nor are we to conclude, that he has not determined to grant the thing for which we pray to him; for that would be presumptuously to enter into his secret purpose, he having nowhere told us that we shall be denied the blessings we want. On the contrary, as an encouragement to prayer, he has told us that there is forgiveness with him, and mercy for the chief of sinners; and, besides this, he has given us farther ground to hope for a gracious answer to prayer, where he gives a heart to seek him. We are hence to behave ourselves, in this duty, as those who pretend not to know God's secret purpose, but rather who desire to wait for some gracious intimation, or token for good, that he will hear and answer our prayer. His secret purpose, therefore, is no more inconsistent with this duty, than if, with those who deny the doctrine we are maintaining, we should conclude that, as relates to the answering of prayer, there is no previous determination with God.

As to our doctrine leading to presumption or despair, there is no ground to conclude that it has a tendency to either. It cannot lead to presumption, inasmuch as election is not discovered to any one till he believes. An unconverted person has no ground to presume and conclude that all is well with him, because he is elected; for that is boldly to determine a thing that he knows nothing of. The objection, with respect to such, supposes that to be known which remains a secret. On the other hand, men have no ground to despair, on a supposition that they are finally rejected. It is one thing to be in a state of unregeneracy, and another thing to be the object of the decree of reprobation. The latter no one can or ought to determine concerning himself, so long as he is in this world; especially if we consider him as enjoying the means of grace, and as having thereby a door of hope open to him. God has pleased to declare, in the gospel, that he will receive sinners who repent and believe in him, how unworthy soever they are. Hence, such are not to conclude that their state is desperate, though it be exceedingly dangerous, but are to wait for the efficacy of the means of grace, and for those blessings which accompany salvation. As to those that are in a converted state, our doctrine is far from having a tendency to lead them either to presumption or to despair. On the contrary, it leads them to thankfulness to God, for his discriminating grace; and when persons experience this, they are not only encouraged to hope for farther blessings, but to perform those duties whereby they may express their gratitude. Presumption, however, is the only thing which it is pretended election leads them to. But this cannot be the natural consequence or tendency of it. If they presume that they shall be saved, this is not to be reckoned a crime in them. That presumption which is supposed in the objection to be a crime, consists in a person's expecting a blessing without reason; but this is contrary to the supposition that he is a believer. It would be



a strange method of reasoning, to infer that he who has ground to conclude that he has a right to eternal life, from those marks and evidences of grace which he finds in himself, is guilty of a sinful presumption when he is induced to lay claim to it. The sense of the objection, therefore, must be this, that a believer, having been once enabled to conclude himself elected, may take occasion, supposing that his work is done and his end answered, to return to his former wicked life, and yet still presume that he shall be saved. Now, his doing so would be a certain indication that he had no ground to conclude that he was in a saved state, but was mistaken when he thought he had. The doctrine of election cannot lead a believer, as such, to presumption. The objection which supposes that it does, is founded on one of two mistakes, either that every one who is elected to salvation knows his interest in this privilege, as though it were immediately revealed to him, without his inferring it from any marks and evidences of grace which he finds in himself, or that it is impossible for any one who thinks that he believes, and thence concludes that he is elected, to appear afterwards to have been mistaken in the judgment which he then passed upon himself. But each of these contains a misrepresentation of the consequences of the doctrine of election. Nor is there any regard had to that necessary distinction which there is, between a person's being chosen to eternal life, and his being able to determine himself to be interested in this privilege. The objection is contrary also to what we have already considered, that whenever God chooses to the end, he chooses to the means, which are inseparably connected with it. This is the only rule whereby we are warranted, when applying it to ourselves, to conclude that we shall be saved.

Farther, it cannot, in the least, be proved that the doctrine of election has any tendency to lead persons to licentiousness, or is inconsistent with our using the utmost endeavours to attain salvation. If it be said, that many vile persons take occasion from it, to give the reins to their corruption, their doing so is not the natural or necessary consequence of the doctrine. There is no truth but may be abused. The apostle Paul did not think the doctrine of the grace of God, which he so strenuously maintained, was less true or glorious, because some drew this vile consequence from it, 'Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound.'<sup>s</sup> As for those means which God has ordained to bring about the salvation of his people, we are obliged to attend upon them, though we know not beforehand what will certainly be the event. And if, through the blessing of God accompanying them, we are effectually called and sanctified, and thereby enabled to know our election, this will, agreeably to the experience of all true believers, have a tendency to promote holiness.

6. It is farther objected, and that more especially against the doctrine of reprobation, that it argues God to be the author of sin, and particularly in such instances as these,—the first entrance of sin into the world, God's imputing the sin of our first parents to all their posterity, and afterwards suffering it to make such a progress as it has done ever since, and, most of all, when it is supposed that this is not only the result of the divine purpose, but that it also respects the blinding of men's minds, and the hardening of their hearts, and so rendering their final impenitency and perdition unavoidable.

As to what concerns the first entrance of sin into the world, it cannot reasonably be denied, that the purpose of God was concerned about it, before it was committed, in the same sense as his actual providence was afterwards, namely, in permitting, though not effecting it. Yet this was not the cause of the committing of it. A bare permission has no positive efficiency in order to commission. The not hindering or restraining a wicked action, does not render him the author of it. It is true, God knew how man would behave himself, particularly that he would misimprove and forfeit that original righteousness in which he was created, and that, by this means, he would contract that guilt which was the consequence, and thereby render himself liable to his just displeasure. To deny this, would be to deny that he from eternity foreknew that which he knew in time. And so far as the actual providence of God was conversant about what was natural in the entrance of sin, so far his purpose determined that it should be; but neither does this argue him to

be the author of sin. This, however, will be farther considered, when we speak concerning the actual providence of God under a following Answer.<sup>t</sup>

As to that part of the objection which respects the imputing of the sin of our first parents to all their posterity, it is more frequently than any other brought against this doctrine. The doctrine is generally represented in the most indefensible terms, without making any abatements as to the degree of punishment that was due to sin. Accordingly our opponents think that we can hardly have the front to affirm, that our arguments in defence of it are agreeable to the divine perfections, as we pretend those others are which have been brought in its defence. But I hope we shall, in its proper place, to which we shall refer it,<sup>u</sup> be able to maintain the doctrine of original sin in consistency with the divine perfections, as well as with scripture. All that I shall say at present is, that if the doctrine of original sin be so explained as that it does not render God the author of sin, his purpose relating to it, which must be supposed in all respects to correspond with it, does not argue him to be the author of it.

As to the progress of sin in the world, and the proneness of all mankind to rebel against God, this, as was formerly observed concerning sin in general, is the object of his permissive, but not his effective will. There is, indeed, this difference between God's suffering sin to enter the world at first, and his suffering the continuance or increase of it, that at first he dealt with man as an innocent creature, and only left him to the mutability of his own will, having before given him a power to retain his integrity. But the fallen creature is become weak, and unable to do anything that is good in all its circumstances; and afterwards is more and more inclined to sin, by contracting vicious habits and persisting in them. Now, though God's leaving man to himself at first, when there was no forfeiture made of his preventing grace, must be reckoned an act of mere sovereignty, his leaving sinners to themselves may be reckoned an act of justice, as a punishment of sin before committed. Neither of these, however, argues him to be the author of sin; nor does the purpose of God relating to them give the least occasion for such an inference.—Again, we must distinguish between the occasion and the cause of sin. God's providential dispensations, though unexceptionably holy and righteous, are often the occasion of sin. Thus his afflictive hand sometimes occasions the corruptions of men to break forth, in repining at and quarrelling with his providence; and his giving outward blessings to one which he withholds from another, gives occasion to some to complain of the injustice of his dealings with them; and the strictness and holiness of his law, gives occasion to corrupt nature to discover itself in the blackest colours. The apostle plainly evinces this truth, when he says, 'Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.'<sup>x</sup> Indeed, there is nothing in the whole compass of providence, or in the methods of the divine government therein, but may be, and often is, an occasion of sin in wicked men. But certainly it is not the cause of sin. The clemency of a prince may occasion a rebellion among his subjects, but it is the vile ingratitude and wickedness of their nature which is the spring and cause of the rebellion. So the providence of God, and consequently his purpose, which is executed thereby, may be the occasion of sin, and yet the charge that God is hereby argued to be the author of sin, is altogether groundless.

As to what is farther objected relating to the purpose of God to blind the minds and harden the hearts of men, and to lead to that final impenitency which is the consequence, God forbid that we should assert that this is a positive act in him. So far, however, as the doctrine implies nothing but his determining to deny that grace which would have had the contrary effect, or his providence relating to that denial, it does not give any countenance to the objection, or weaken the force of the arguments which we have already laid down, and which are very consistent with it.

7. There is another objection, which is generally laid down in so moving a way, that, whether the argument be just or not, the style is adapted to affect the minds of men with prejudice against the doctrine we are maintaining. The objection is,

<sup>t</sup> See Quest. xviii.

<sup>u</sup> See Quest. xxi. xxii.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. vii. 8.



that our doctrine is inconsistent with God's judicial proceedings against the wicked in the day of judgment, and that it will afford the sinner a plea, in which he may speak to this effect: 'Lord, I sinned by a fatal necessity. It was impossible for me to avoid that which thou art now offended with me for; it was what thou didst decree should come to pass. I have been told that thy decrees are unalterable, and that it is as possible to change the course of nature, or to remove the mountains which thou hast fixed with thy hand, as to alter thy purpose. Wilt thou condemn one who sinned and fell pursuant to thy will? Dost thou will that men should sin and perish, and then lay the blame at their door, as though they were culpable for doing what thou hast determined should be done?'

This objection supposes that the decree of God lays a necessary constraint on the will of man, and forces it to sin. If the objectors could make it appear that it does this, no reply could be made. But this is so to represent the argument we are maintaining, that no one who has just ideas of our doctrine would ever understand it; and it is directly contrary to the method of explaining it which we have pursued. We have already proved, in our answer to the third objection, that sin is not necessary in that sense in which the objectors suppose it to be, or that, though the decree of God renders events necessary, yet it does not take away the efficiency of second causes, and that therefore the purpose of God relating to any event, is not to be pleaded as an excuse for sin, or as a ground of exemption from punishment. We read of the Jews, that 'with wicked hands they crucified' our Saviour. Now, while the crime was their own, the event is expressly said to have been done by, or in pursuance of, 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' He foreknew what they would do, and purposed not to prevent it; yet he did not force their will to commit it. Elsewhere God says concerning Israel, 'Thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea from that time thine ear was not opened;' and then he adds, 'I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously.' Israel might have pleaded that God knew beforehand how they would behave themselves, and so have thrown the blame on him for not preventing the foreseen event, but suffering them to go on in their destructive way, with as much reason as the sinner is supposed, in the objection, to plead in the day of judgment that the doctrine we are maintaining exculpates him from his guilt.

Again, the immutability of the divine purpose, whatever has been said concerning it, does not give the least countenance to any one's charging his sin on God. We have, in answer to the last objection, proved, that it does not render him the author of sin. Hence, man's destruction must lie at his own door. It is one thing to say, that it is in the sinner's power to save himself, and another thing to say, that the sin he commits is not wilful, and therefore that guilt is not contracted. Hence, no matter of excuse, according to the import of the objection, is afforded to the sinner.

### *Practical Inferences from the Doctrine of Election.*

We are now to consider some things which may be inferred from the doctrine we have been insisting on; and how it is to be practically improved by us, to the glory of God, and our spiritual advantage.

From the methods taken to oppose and decry it, by misrepresentations containing little less than blasphemy, we infer, that in whatever degree unjust consequences deduced from a doctrine may be an hinderance to its obtaining in the world, they will not render it less true or defensible, and ought not to prejudice the minds of men against the sacred writings or religion in general. Several scriptures are produced in defence of this doctrine, and others in opposition to it; and the utmost caution has not been used to reconcile the sense given of these with the natural ideas which we have of the divine perfections. Many also in defending one side of the question, have made use of unguarded expressions, or called that a scripture-doctrine which is remote from being so; and others in opposition to them, have, with too much assurance, charged their opponents with consequences which are neither avowed by them, nor justly deduced from their method of reasoning. The unthinking

and irreligious part of mankind have hence taken occasion, with the Deists, to set themselves against revealed religion, or to give way to scepticism, as though there were nothing certain or defensible in religion; and take occasion to make it the subject of satire and ridicule. But passing this by, though it is a matter very much to be lamented, we shall consider this doctrine as rendered less exceptionable, or more justly represented. Accordingly, we may infer from it, that as it is agreeable to the divine perfections, so it has the greatest tendency to promote practical godliness. For,

1. God's having foreordained whatever comes to pass, should lead us to an humble submission to his will, in all the dispensations of his providence. When we consider that nothing, in this respect, comes by chance, the reflection should have a tendency to quiet our minds, and silence all our murmuring and uneasy thoughts, whatever afflictions we are exposed to. We are too apt to complain sometimes of second causes, as though all our miseries took their rise from these; and, at other times, to afflict ourselves beyond measure, as apprehending that those proper means have not been used which might have prevented them. So Martha tells our Saviour, 'If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'<sup>a</sup> We ought rather to consider, however, that all befalls us in pursuance of God's purpose. Had he designed to have prevented our affliction, he would have directed to other means conducive to that end, or would have imparted to those which were used their desired success. We use the means, as not knowing what is the secret purpose of God with respect to the event; but when that purpose is made known to us, it should teach us to acquiesce in, and be entirely resigned to, the divine will.

2. When we cannot see the reason or understand the meaning of the dispensations of divine providence, and are not able to pass any judgment concerning future events, whether relating to ourselves or others, and when all things look with a very dismal aspect, as to what concerns the interest and church of God in the world, we must be content to wait till he is pleased to discover them to us. Often, as our Saviour said to one of his disciples,<sup>b</sup> what he does, 'we know not now, but shall know hereafter.' It is no wonder that we are at a loss as to God's purposes, since secret things belong to him. Hence, all that we are to do, in such a case as has been supposed, is to rest satisfied that all things shall, in the end, appear to have a tendency to advance his own perfections, and bring about the salvation of his people.

3. Since the purpose of God respects the means as well as the end, we ought to use proper means by which we may hope to obtain grace and glory. The doctrine of election does not lead us to sloth and indifference in religion; for that is to suppose that the end and means are separated in God's purpose. And when, through his blessing attending them, the ordinances or means of grace are made effectual for the working of faith and all other graces, the connexion of these, in God's purpose, with glory, ought to encourage our hope relating to the end of faith, even the salvation of our souls.

4. Let us take heed that we do not peremptorily, without ground, conclude ourselves elected to eternal life on the one hand, or rejected on the other. To determine that we are chosen to salvation, before we are effectually called, is presumptuously to enter into God's secret counsels, which we cannot, at present, have a certain and determinate knowledge of; and to lay this as a foundation, as to what concerns the conduct of our lives, is often of very pernicious tendency. If, as the result of this conclusion, we take encouragement to go on in sin, we shall cut the sinews of all religion, and expose ourselves to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, and a greater degree of impenitency and unbelief, as the consequence of bold presumption and affront to the divine Majesty. Nor, on the other hand, are we to conclude that we are not elected. For though we may be in suspense about the event of things, and not know whether we are elected or rejected, our suspense is not inconsistent with our using endeavours to attain a good hope, through grace. To determine that we are not elected, is to conclude against ourselves, that all endeavours will be to no purpose; and this we have no ground to do, since it is



one thing to conclude that we are in a state of unregeneracy, and another thing to determine that we are not elected. The consequence of our concluding that we are in an unconverted state, ought to be our praying, waiting, and hoping for the efficacy of divine grace, which extends itself to the chief of sinners as a relief against despair, though such can have no ground to say that they are elected. The safest way, and that which is most conducive to the ends of religion, is to be firmly persuaded, that though the final state of man be certainly determined by God, yet the divine purpose is to be no rule for an unregenerated person to take his measures from, any more than if the event were a matter of uncertainty, and in all respects undetermined.

5. Let us, according to the apostle's advice, 'Give diligence to make our calling and election sure.'<sup>c</sup> It is certainly a very great privilege for us, not merely to know that some were chosen to eternal life, but to be able to conclude that we are of that happy number. In order to this, we must not expect to have an extraordinary revelation, or to find ourselves described by name in scripture. The rule by which we are to judge of this matter, is our inquiring whether we have those marks or evidences of being elected which scripture exhibits. Hence, we are, by a diligent and impartial self-examination, to endeavour to know whether we are called or enabled to perform the obedience of faith, which God is said to elect his people to; whether we are holy and without blame before him in love; whether we have the temper and disposition of the children of God, as evidence of our being chosen to the adoption of children; and whether, as such, we are conformed to the image of Christ.

6. If we have ground to conclude that we are chosen to eternal life, we ought to improve this to the glory of God, and our own spiritual advantage. It ought to put us upon admiring and adoring the riches of discriminating grace; and it also imposes upon his people the highest obligation to walk humbly with God, as well as thankfully. It is owing to his grace not only that they are chosen to eternal life, but that they are enabled to discern their interest in this privilege.

c 2 Pet. i. 10.

[NOTE 2 U. *The Foreknowledge of God.*—If we view the divine foreknowledge in the light simply of prescience or prevision, it ought not to be distinguished, as to its own nature, from the divine knowledge. What intrinsic difference—what difference as respects the Deity himself—can there be between knowing and foreknowing? There is none. The difference has reference only to the creature—to those distinctions of time which apply only to what is created—or to our analytical method of comprehending any matter relating to Deity by its practical manifestation. Whatever God knows now, he knew from eternity. There is no change, no succession of ideas, no capability of enlargement or modification, in his knowledge. When predicated of him in eternity, and when predicated of him now, it is strictly the same. We think of the divine omniscience surveying things as present, and call it knowledge; we think of that omniscience surveying the same things as future, and call it foreknowledge. The distinction, so far as there is one, exists solely in our own minds, in our method of comprehension; and has no reference to the omniscience itself, which, view it as we will and name it as we may, is, in all respects, one.

But scripture very often uses the word knowledge, as applied to God, in a widely different sense from that of omniscience,—in a sense implying agency, love, approbation. What God approves, he is, in this sense, said to know; and what he disapproves, he is, in the same sense, said not to know. Multitudes of texts might be quoted which speak of his knowledge of approbation, and which cannot be construed to speak simply of his omniscience; but the few which Dr. Ridgeley mentions, are sufficient as a specimen. Now, as there is perfect identity between God's knowledge of intelligence, and his foreknowledge of intelligence; so there seems perfect identity between his knowledge of approbation, and his foreknowledge of approbation. Whatever he approves now, he approved from eternity; whatever he recognises with complacency in the course of time, he recognised with complacency before the foundation of the world. All things, which are the objects of his approving knowledge now, were the objects of his eternal approving foreknowledge.

Now knowledge, in the sense of approbation, has reference to all God's own works,—to all things which arise from his own immediate agency. He contemplates these, when they are done, and pronounces them 'very good'; and he contemplated them when yet future, and pronounced them to be what he had resolved to make them, and what they actually became. All his own works are marked by infinite wisdom, holiness, and beneficence; and all are necessarily known to him with the knowledge of approbation or complacency. But to approve, supposes an object to be approved; and an object to be approved, as regards the Creator of all things, supposes something to be created, something to be performed, or a purpose to create or perform it. All objects of approbation, all things truly good, all creatures, all manifestations of excellence, are from God himself. The possible existence, the actual production, of all depended wholly on the divine will. God alone is 'the Creator of the ends of the earth'; he is the source of all being, all excellence, all existence and

properties which are objects of his divine approbation. What he knows, therefore, in the way of approval or complacency, is necessarily the result of his own purpose,—‘the good pleasure of his own will.’ Approbation or complacency supposes objects of excellence; objects of excellence suppose divine agency; and divine agency supposes a will or determination in Deity to act. God’s knowledge of approbation thus rests, in the order of the fulfilment of events, upon his will or purpose as the source, producer, or giver of all good.

But what, when viewed in the light of God’s unchangeableness and eternity, is his knowledge of approbation? Is it different in its nature or in the basis on which it rests, from the same knowledge when viewed as contemplating objects in the course of time? Surely not. There is no distinction of past and present in the approbation, any more than in the intelligence, of the divine mind. His foreknowledge, in the sense of approbation, as truly as in the sense of intelligence, is the same thing as his knowledge. We may easily see, then, the force and beauty of those texts which speak of the foreknowledge of God. Peter describes believers as ‘elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.’ They were elect, not as contemplated in the light of persons possessing worth or performing obedience of their own, but as contemplated in the light of objects of God’s sovereign love,—objects of the impartation from himself of all the excellence which they possess,—objects which his own purpose had resolved to bless with his influences and complacency. Paul says, ‘God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.’ They were God’s people in fulfilment of his purpose to make them such; his people, whom, in virtue of his determination to create them anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, he regarded with an everlasting love. The same apostle says, ‘For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.’ Calling and justifying, in the order of occurrence, precede practical Christianity, personal holiness, the actual living character of spiritual children, or ‘conformity to the image of God’s Son.’ Predestination to the last, therefore, cannot rest on prescience or prevision of calling and justification. But whom God foreknew—whom he regarded as ‘his own workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which he before ordained that they should walk in them’—whom he contemplated with everlasting love as objects destined to receive from him the saving influences of his grace and beautifying impartations of excellence—they he predestinated to personal holiness, calling, justification, and glory.—ED.]

[NOTE 2 V. *Election in Christ*.—Dr. Ridgeley says, ‘We are not to suppose that the apostle intends by our being “chosen in Christ,” that we are chosen for the sake of Christ, as though any of his mediatorial acts were the ground or reason of our being chosen.’ What he means, as may be inferred from his illustration, is, that the work of Christ did not ‘purchase’ election, or that the love and grace of God which election displays are free and sovereign. Now it is assuredly true that election, or the divine love which it manifests, was unpurchased and unpurchaseable,—that the grace of God is free, sovereign, unconditional. But the execution of the purpose of election, no less truly than the purpose itself, is unpurchased and free. ‘Election,’ says Dr. Ridgeley, ‘is an act of sovereign grace.’ But so is justification,—so is the work of the Divine Spirit in the heart,—so is the entire execution of the purpose of sovereign love. No blessing was purchased: every blessing flows from the free love, the absolute mercy and grace of God. What Christ purchased was the church. He redeemed, not blessings, but persons: he bought, not pardon and peace and glory, but the souls and bodies of his people. So far as freeness or absoluteness is concerned, the actual bestowal of a blessing, and the divine purpose to bestow it, are the same in character. We judge—as Dr. Ridgeley frequently and with justice remarks—we judge of the purpose of God by its execution; and we call the purpose of election unconditional of any merit in man, just because we find the execution of it unconditional of any merit in man. But its intrinsic sovereignty—its being altogether unconditional as respects man—is a totally different matter from its having no reference to the work of Christ. What our Lord’s redemptional work accomplished, was not the purchase of the divine love or the purchase of salvation, but the magnifying of the divine law and the making of it honourable,—the rendering of it a right and holy act on the part of God to pardon the guilty,—the substitutionary enduring of the curse of the law, and the consequent purchase of the souls of men from the captivity of guilt and sin. Justification is based upon the atonement, not because the atonement purchased it, or purchased the grace displayed in it, but because it vindicated and manifested the moral glory of the divine justice and holiness in giving pardon to the sinner. Christ is made of God unto us justification, not because his redemptional work ‘moved God to mercy’—for the divine mercy is absolute—but because ‘he became the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.’ Now, where is the difference between the purpose of election and the execution of the purpose? They are alike distinguished, on the one hand, by freeness, unpurchasedness, absoluteness; and have they not, on the other, a corresponding sameness of connexion with the work of the Redeemer?

Election, view it as we may, is election to salvation; and salvation implies a Saviour. It is vain to institute metaphysical distinctions respecting ‘the order of thought,’ or ‘the order of nature;’ and to debate what, in the scheme of redemption, is to be considered as an end, and what as a means, and whether the end or the means hold prior place in the divine purpose. The only ‘order’ of which the nature of the case or the statements of scripture admit a conception, or which can tend to aid our comprehension, is the order of occurrence—the order in which the purpose is developed and executed. In reference to the plan of mercy, we speak of the divine purposes in the plural number, only to aid our conceptions of the numerous objects to which one undivided purpose of the divine mind referred. A luminous, and, in general, remarkably correct writer, who maintains the same view as Dr. Ridgeley, justly says: ‘In the divine mind there is no succession of thoughts;’ and he implies that the purpose respecting the scheme of redemption, though multi-



form in its development or execution, was intrinsically one. (See *Lectures on Theology*, by the late Rev. John Dick, D.D. Lect. xxxv.) Why, then, should election and the work of Christ, or the purpose relating to salvation, and the purpose relating to the Saviour, be viewed apart? Scripture appears to connect the one with the other so closely, so identically, that, to separate them on its warrant, would seem as hopeless as to separate the work of Christ from the execution of election.—Believers were ‘chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having been predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his grace, wherein he hath made them accepted in the Beloved,’ Eph. i. 4, 6. ‘They are elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,’ 1 Pet. i. 2. They were ‘predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren,’ Rom. viii. 29. They are ‘God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them,’ Eph. ii. 10. Any person fond of making arbitrary distinctions, might, on the authority of these texts, assert just the opposite of Dr. Ridgeley’s view; and say that, instead of the work of Christ presupposing election, election presupposes the work of Christ. Union to the Saviour, sprinkling of atoning blood, justification, adoption, obedience, good works, sanctification, conformity to the image of Christ, are the results on which the purpose of election expatiates; and all of them imply, or, as a framer of distinctions might assert, they all presuppose, the appointment, offices, and work of the Redeemer. It is enough, however, that we view the purpose respecting salvation, and the purpose respecting the Saviour, as one and inseparable. Just as the Saviour and salvation are regarded in the execution of the purpose, so let them be regarded in the purpose itself. Then, freed from the confusion of an unwarrantable or a useless distinction, and contemplating election in Christ with a reference to its practical influence on the heart, believers will say with the apostle Paul, ‘God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,’ 2 Tim. i. 9.

Dr. Ridgeley does not sanction the distinction, which he mentions as made by many writers, between Christ as the Head of the elect, and Christ as their Redeemer. He had good reason to doubt its soundness; yet, in rejecting it, he virtually abandons his doctrine as to the connexion between the purpose of election and the work of Christ. There must be some sense in which believers were ‘chosen in Christ,’—some sense in which they are saved ‘according to God’s own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began.’ Persons who deny that they were ‘chosen in Christ’ as the Redeemer or Mediator, are obliged to assert that they were chosen in him as their federal head. Yet, as Dr. Ridgeley hints, there is good reason to believe that Christ is, in any sense, Head only and strictly as Mediator. All the passages, with one exception, which speak of him as the Head, assert him to sustain that character in relation to his redeemed church, and in immediate connexion with his redemptional work. The one exception is the passage which says, ‘Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power’ (Col. ii. 10.); and this—which, at first sight, might seem to assert no connexion with Mediatorship, and even to sanction the theory of those who talk of Christ’s influences as Head being more extensive than his influences as Mediator—is fully explained by a strictly parallel passage, which not only identifies the Headship over all principality and power with Christ’s Mediatorial relation to the church, but even represents it as arising out of the completion of his redemptional work on earth: ‘The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all,’ Eph. i. 19–23.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 W. *The Necessity of the Divine Purpose*.—What Dr. Ridgeley says respecting the purpose of God being necessary, so far as it has truth or meaning, is just a repetition of what he had said, in a previous section, respecting the unchangeableness of the divine purpose. As to ‘the purpose of God rendering things necessary which are in themselves contingent and arbitrary,’ the statement is utterly unwarrantable, and assumes a fiction or impossibility. There is no contingency as regards God, no contingency ‘in things themselves,’ no possibility of objects coming into existence apart from the divine will and power. That objects are in any sense things, that they can exist at all, that they possess even the contingency or possibility of existing, and not merely that they shall necessarily exist, depends solely on the will of God. Contingency or arbitrariness has reference only to the limited knowledge and dependent will of man.

Dr. Ridgeley’s distinction between the determining and the powerful will of God, if not unmeaning, is at least unnecessary and bewildering. By God’s will as to a future event, we mean his purpose; and by his power in effecting the event, we mean the execution of his purpose. But to call the former the determining will of God, and the latter his powerful will, only parades an apparent learnedness of phrase, and produces confusion or obscurity in the conceptions of a plain mind.

Dr. Ridgeley’s corresponding distinction between ‘the purpose of God as the internal moving cause of salvation,’ and ‘the power of God as the immediate cause of it,’ is still more objectionable. Either the distinction, like a thousand others borrowed from the schoolmen, is sheer jargon; or, if it have a meaning, it is unaccounted with the view every where given in scripture of the moral basis of salvation. Indeed, to speak of causes in the plural number, when the one agency of Deity is designated, or to represent various divine attributes as so many various causes, when one result of divine acting is accounted for, is utterly inconsistent with correct notions either of Deity, of divine agency, or of causation. Salvation ought, without any distribution of causes, to be ascribed simply to God; or if viewed as the result of any special mode of divine acting or manifestation, it must be ascribed

to God's love, his free mercy, his beneficent grace, the good pleasure of his own will and goodness.—Ed.]

[NOTE 2 X. *Divine Sovereignty and Equity*.—'The purpose of God, in passing by a part of mankind,' must not, as Dr. Ridgeley teaches, 'be considered either as the result of his sovereign pleasure, or as an act of justice,' but must be viewed as based purely and entirely on divine equity. When God wills to save man, to bestow blessings on the creature, to bring salvation to the guilty, he acts altogether unconditionally, or according to his own good pleasure; but when he wills to withhold any boon of his favour, or to inflict any privation, any suffering, any punishment, he acts strictly with regard to the sufferer's desert. Toward those who are blessed by him, his dispensations are all pervaded by sovereignty; and toward those who are abandoned or afflicted, his dispensations are all pervaded by equity. 'Behold,' says the apostle, 'the goodness and the severity of God,' *χρηστεύματα καὶ ἀποπομίαν Θεοῦ*, the essential or sovereign beneficence of God, and 'cutting off' by him, or his withholding of blessings and inflicting of punishment; 'on them which fell severely, but toward thee,' who standest, 'goodness,' Rom. xi. 22.

God's 'denying the means of grace,' or 'denying any blessing,' is hardly a suitable phrase. Persons from whom blessings are withheld neither ask nor desire them: they, in fact, despise them, or regard them with dislike or repugnance, or cherish inclinations and practise superstitions of a contrary and antagonistic element. Blessings are not denied; they are only not bestowed, because unmerited, undesired, and disliked. The withholding of them in all cases from guilty and depraved man would have been simply equitable,—not an act of sovereignty, but an act of man's deserving; and the withholding of them from a part of mankind, is not changed in character by the sovereign bestowal of them on another part. That God gives blessings to some men, is just because 'it seems good in his sight'; but that he withholds them from others, is because the parties have forfeited them by their sins, and incurred his righteous displeasure. Equity alone has to do with the will or dispensation of privation or punishment; and sovereignty has to do simply with the positive bestowal of unmerited good.—Ed.]

## THE WORK OF CREATION.

QUESTION XIV. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

ANSWER. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

QUESTION XV. *What is the work of creation?*

ANSWER. The work of creation is that, wherein God did, in the beginning, by the word of his power, make, of nothing, the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

HAVING considered God's eternal purpose, as respecting whatever shall come to pass, which is generally called an internal or immanent act of the divine will, we are now to consider those works which are produced by him in pursuance of it. It is inconsistent with the idea of an infinitely perfect Being, to suppose that any of his decrees shall not take effect. 'Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?'<sup>d</sup> 'His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.'<sup>e</sup> This is a necessary consequence from the immutability of his will, as well as from the end which he has designed to attain, namely, the advancement of his own glory. If he should not execute his decrees, he would lose that revenue of glory which he designed to bring to himself. But this it cannot be supposed that he would do. Accordingly we are to consider his power as exerted, in order to the accomplishment of his purpose. This is said to have been done in the first production of all things, which is called the work of creation, or in his upholding and governing all things, which is his providence. Both these are to be particularly considered.

We shall first speak concerning the work of creation; and inquire what we are to understand by creation, and consider it as a work peculiar to God. Secondly, We shall show that this work was not performed from eternity, but in the beginning of time. Thirdly, We shall inquire how God is said to create all things by the word of his power. Fourthly, We shall consider the end for which he made them, namely, for himself, or for his own glory. Fifthly, We shall consider the time in which he made them. Lastly, We shall inquire into the quality or condition of creation, as all things are said to have been made very good.



*The Meaning of the word 'Creation.'*

It is the application of the word 'creation' to the things made, or some circumstances attending this action, that determine the sense of it. The Hebrew and Greek words<sup>f</sup> by which it is expressed, are sometimes used to signify the natural production of things. Thus it is said, 'The people that shall be created,' speaking of the generation to come, 'shall praise the Lord.'<sup>g</sup> Elsewhere, God says, 'I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created,'<sup>h</sup> that is, where thou wast born, in the land of thy nativity. Sometimes the word is used to signify the dispensations of providence, which, though they are the wonderful effects of divine power, yet are taken in a sense different from the first production of all things. Thus it is said, 'I form the light, and create darkness;' metaphorical expressions which are explained in the following words, 'I make peace, and create evil.' On the other hand, God's creating is sometimes expressed by his 'making all things.' The word 'make,' in its common acceptation, is taken for the natural production of things; though, in this instance, it is used for the production of things which are supernatural. Thus it is said, 'All things were made by him;'<sup>k</sup> and again, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.'<sup>l</sup> It is thus by the application of these words to the things produced, that we are more especially to judge of the sense of them. Accordingly, when God is said to create or make the heavens and earth, or to bring things into being which before did not exist, this is the most proper sense of the word 'creation.' In this sense we understand it, in the head we are entering upon. It is the production of all things out of nothing by his almighty word. This is generally called immediate creation; and was the first display of divine power, a work with which time began. So we are to understand these words, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,'<sup>m</sup> that is, that first matter out of which all things were formed, which has been neither increased nor diminished ever since, nor can be, whatever alterations there may be made in things, without supposing, which we have no ground to do, that there may be an act of the divine will to annihilate any part of it.

Again, creation is sometimes taken for God's bringing things into that form in which they are. This is generally called a mediate creation, as in the account we have of it in the first chapter of Genesis. There God is said, out of that matter which he created at first, to create the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all living creatures which move therein, after their respective kinds. This no finite wisdom or power could have done. The work was supernatural, and so differs from the natural production of things by creatures. They can produce nothing, but out of other things which have in themselves a tendency, according to the fixed laws of nature, to be made that which is designed to be produced out of them. When a plant or a tree is produced out of a seed, or when the form or shape of things is altered by the skill of men, there is a tendency in the things themselves, in a natural way, to answer the end designed by those who made them. In this respect men are said to make, but not create those things. Creation, therefore, is a work peculiar to God, from which all creatures are excluded. Accordingly, it is a glory which God often appropriates to himself in scripture. Thus he is called, by way of eminence, 'The Creator of the ends of the earth.'<sup>n</sup> And he says concerning himself, with an unparalleled magnificence of expression, 'I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.'<sup>o</sup> He is said, also, to have done this exclusively of all others. Thus he says, 'I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.'<sup>p</sup> Indeed, it cannot be otherwise, since creation is a work of infinite power. It is hence too great for any finite being, who can act no otherwise but in proportion to the circumscribed limits of its own power, and who, at best but a natural agent, cannot produce anything supernatural. We may infer, therefore, that no creature was an instrument made use of by God in the production of all things, or that infinite

f עָשָׂה בְּרָא, ποιῶν, ποιεῖν, ποιεῖν, ποιῶν.

i Isa. xlv. 7. k John i. 3.

n Isa. xl. 28. o Isa. xlv. 12.

g Psal. cii. 18.

l Psal. xxxiii. 6.

p Isa. xlv. 24.

h Ezek. xxi. 30.

m Gen. i. 1.

power could not be exerted by a finite medium. But this has been already considered under a foregoing answer.

*Creation not Eternal.*

We are now to consider, that the work of creation was not performed from eternity, but in the beginning of time. This we assert against some of the heathen philosophers, who have, in their writings, defended the eternity of the world.<sup>r</sup> They were induced to do so by the low conceptions which they had of the power of God, supposing that because all creatures or natural agents must have some materials to work upon, and that, with respect to them, nothing can be made out of nothing, the same principles must be viewed as applicable to God. This absurd opinion has been imbibed by some who have pretended to the Christian name. It was maintained by Hermogenes about the middle of the second century, and, with a great deal of spirit and argument, opposed by Tertullian. Among other things, that Father observes, that philosophy, in some respects, had paved the way to heresy.<sup>s</sup> Probably the apostle Paul was apprehensive that philosophy would have this tendency, or that they who were bred up in the schools of the philosophers would—as it is plain they often did, especially on the subject of creation—adapt their notions in divinity to those which they had learned in the schools; and therefore he says, ‘Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.’<sup>t</sup> They who have defended the heathen notion respecting creation, have been divided in their sentiments about it. Some suppose, in general, that matter was eternal, but not brought into that form in which it now is, till God, by his almighty power, produced a change in it, and so altered the form of things. Others suppose that the world was in a form not much unlike to what it now is from eternity, and that there were eternal successive ages and generations of men, and a constant alteration of things,—some parts of the world at one time destroyed by deluges or fire or earthquakes, and other parts at another time; and so that there was a kind of succession of generation and corruption,—former worlds lost and buried in ruins, all the monuments of their antiquity perishing with them, and new ones arising in their stead. This they assert as a blind to their ungrounded opinion, and as an answer to the reasonable demand which might be made. If the world was eternal, how comes it to pass that we know nothing of what was done in it in those ages which went before that which we reckon the beginning of time?

As to the schoolmen, though none of them have directly adopted this notion, which is so notoriously contrary to scripture, yet some have very much confounded and puzzled the minds of men with their metaphysical subtleties on the subject of creation. Some have pretended to maintain that, though God did not actually create anything before that beginning of time which is mentioned in scripture, yet that he might, had he pleased, have produced things from eternity,<sup>u</sup> because he had from eternity infinite power and a sovereign will. This power, they say, might have been deduced into act, and so there might have been an eternal production of things; for to suppose that infinite power cannot exert itself, is contrary to the idea of its being infinite. To suppose, also, that God was infinitely good from eternity, implies that he might have communicated being to creatures from eternity, in which his goodness would have exerted itself. They farther argue, that it is certain that God might have created the world sooner than he did; so that, instead of its having continued in being the number of years which it has done, it might have existed any other unlimited number of years, or since, by an act of his will, it has existed so many

q See page 209.

r Of this opinion were Aristotle and his followers; though he acknowledges that it was contrary to the sentiments of all the philosophers who were before him. Vid. Arist. de Cælo, lib. i. cap. 2, who, speaking concerning the creation of the world, says, *γενομενον μὲν οὐκ ἅπαντες σιναι φασιν.*

s Tertull. adv. Hermog. cap. 8. *Hæreticorum Patriarchæ Philosophi*; which was so memorable a passage, that it was quoted, upon the same occasion, by Jerome, and others of the fathers.

t Coloss. ii. 8.

u This was maintained by Aquinas, Durandus, Cajetan, and others, though opposed by Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, &c.



thousand years as it appears from scripture to have done, it might, had he pleased, have existed any other number of years, though we suppose it never so large, and consequently that it might have existed from eternity. But what is this, but to darken truth by words without knowledge, or to measure the perfections of God by the line or standard of finite things? It is to conceive of the eternity of God, as though it were successive. Hence, though we do not deny that God could have created the world any number of years which a finite mind can describe sooner than he did; yet this would not be to create it from eternity, since that exceeds all bounds. We do not deny that the divine power might have been deduced into act, or created the world before he did; yet to say that he could create it from eternity, is contrary to the nature of things,—it is to suppose, that an infinite duration might be communicated to a finite being, or that God might make a creature equal, in duration, with himself. This notion involves the greatest absurdity; and the impossibility of the thing does not, in the least, argue any defect of power in him.

We may hence infer the vanity and bold presumption of measuring the power of God by the line of the creature, and the great advantage which we receive from divine revelation, which sets this matter in a clear light, and from which it appears that nothing existed before time but God. This is agreeable to the highest reason, and the divine perfections. But to suppose that a creature existed from eternity, implies a contradiction. To be a creature, is to be produced by the power of a Creator, who is God; and this is inconsistent with the supposition of its existing from eternity, a supposition which represents it as having a being before it was brought into being. Moreover, since to exist from eternity is to have an infinite or unlimited duration, it follows that if the first matter, out of which all things were formed, was infinite in its duration, it must have all other perfections; particularly, it must be self-existent, and have in it nothing that is finite, for infinite and finite perfections are inconsistent with each other; and, if so, then it must not consist of any parts, or be divisible, as all material things are. Besides, if the world was eternal, it could not be measured by successive duration; inasmuch as there is no term or point, whence this succession may be computed, for that is inconsistent with eternity. And if its duration was once unmeasured, or not computed by succession, how came it afterwards to be successive, as the duration of all material beings is? Again, to suppose matter to be co-eternal with God, is to suppose it to be equal with him; for whatever has one divine perfection, must have all. This theory, therefore, is contrary to those natural ideas which we have of the divine perfections, and contains such absurdities as have not the least colour of reason to support them. But it more evidently appears from scripture, that the world was made in the beginning of time, and therefore did not exist from eternity. We read there, that ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;’<sup>x</sup> and again, ‘Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.’<sup>y</sup> Now, since we are not to confound time and eternity together, or to say that that which was created in the beginning was without beginning, that is, from eternity, it is evident, that no creature was eternal.

Having thus considered the impossibility of the existence of finite things from eternity, we may take occasion to vindicate the account we have in scripture, concerning the world’s having been created between five and six thousand years since, from the objections of those who suppose that the antiquity of it exceeds the scripture-account by many ages. Those who follow the LXX translation of the Old Testament, in their chronological account of time, suppose the world to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years older than we have ground to conclude it is, according to the account we have in the Hebrew text. This we cannot but think to be a mistake; and many of the Fathers,<sup>z</sup> through their unacquaintedness with the He-

x Gen. i. 1.

y Heb. i. 10.

z Thus Augustine, speaking concerning the years from the time of the creation to his time, reckons them to be not full, that is, almost six thousand years; whereas, in reality, it was but about four thousand four hundred, herein being imposed on by this translation. Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xii. cap. 10.

brew language, have fallen into it; for, excepting Jerome and Origen, they hardly used any but the LXX translation.<sup>a</sup>

This, however, we shall pass over, and proceed to consider the account which some give of the antiquity of the world. This they represent as a great deal more remote than what appears from scripture; and the accounts of it are found principally in the writings of those who were altogether unacquainted with the divine word. Thus the Egyptians, according to the report of some ancient historians, pretended that they had chronicles of the reigns of their kings for many thousands of years longer than we have ground to conclude the world has stood.<sup>b</sup> The Chaldeans exceed them in the accounts they give of some things contained in their history; and the Chinese pretend to exceed the Chaldeans by many thousand years. But these accounts are fabulous and ungrounded.<sup>c</sup> They are confuted and exposed by many of the heathen themselves, as ridiculous and absurd boasts, rather than authentic accounts; and no one, who has the least degree of modesty, can oppose them to the account we have in scripture of the time that the world has continued, which is no more than between five or six thousand years.

That the world cannot be of greater antiquity than this, may be proved from the account which we have, in scripture and other writings, of the origin of nations, and the inventors of things. It is not reasonable to suppose, that men lived in the world many thousand years, without the knowledge of those things which were necessary for the improvement of their minds, and of other things which were conducive to the good of human society, as well as subservient to the conveniencies of life; but this they must have done, if they lived before these things were known in the world. As to the origin of nations, which spread themselves over the earth after the universal deluge, we have an account of it in Gen. x. We have there, in particular, an account of the first rise of the Assyrian monarchy; which was erected by Nimrod, who is supposed to be the same whom other writers call Belus. This monarchy was continued, either under the name of the Assyrian, or under that of the Babylonian, till Cyrus' time; and no writers pretend that there was any before it. According to the scripture-account of it, it was erected above seventeen hundred years after the creation of the world. Now if the world had been so old as some pretend, or had exceeded the scripture-account of its age and duration, we should certainly have had some authentic relation of the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations, in those foregoing ages. Here, however, history is altogether silent;

a Every one who observes the LXX translation in their chronological account of the lives of the patriarchs, from Adam to Abraham, in Gen. chap. v. compared with chap. xi. will find that there are so many years added to the account of the lives of several there mentioned, as will make the sum total, from the creation of the world to the call of Abraham, to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years more than the account which we have in the Hebrew text. This I rather choose to call a mistake, in that translation, than to attempt to defend it; though some, who have paid too great a deference to it, have thought that the Hebrew text was corrupted, after our Saviour's time, by the Jews, by leaving out those years which the LXX have added, designing hereby to make the world believe, that the Messiah was not to come so soon as he did, by fourteen or fifteen hundred years; and that therefore the Hebrew text, in those places, is to be corrected by that version. But this I cannot but conclude to be a very injurious insinuation, as well as not supported by any argument that has the least probability in it.

b Vid. Pomp. Mel. lib. i. cap. 9. who speaks of the annals of the kings of Egypt, as containing above thirteen thousand years. Others extend the antiquity of that nation many thousand years more. Vid. Diod. Sicul. Biblioth. lib. i.

c Vid. Cicero de Divinat. lib. i. who condemns the Egyptians and Babylonians, as foolish, vain, yea impudent, in their accounts relating to this matter, when they speak, as some of them do, of things done four hundred and seventy thousand years before. On this occasion, Lactantius, in lib. vii. § 14. de Vita beata, passes this just censure upon them, 'Quia se posse argui non putabant liberum sibi crediderunt esse, mentiri.' And Macrobi. in Somn. Scip. cap. 11. supposes that they did not measure their years as we do, by the annual revolution of the sun, but by the moon; and so a year, according to them, was no more than a month, which he supposes Virgil was apprized of, when he calls the common solar year *Annus Magnus*, as compared with those short ones that were measured by the monthly revolution of the moon. But this will not bring the Egyptian and Chaldean accounts to a just number of years; for some of them would, notwithstanding, exceed the time that the world has stood. As for the Chinese, they have no authentic histories which give any account of this matter; but all depends upon uncertain tradition, transmitted to them by those who are their leaders in religious matters, and reported by travellers, who have received these accounts from them, which, therefore, are far from deserving any credit in the world.



for we suppose that the account which the Egyptians give of their dynasties, and the reigns of their gods and kings, in those foregoing ages, are, as was before observed, ungrounded and fabulous. As to the inventors of things which are necessary in human life, we have some hints in scripture. We have there an account<sup>d</sup> of the first who made any considerable improvement in the art of husbandry and the management of cattle; and of the first instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, by whose art those tools were framed which are necessary for the making of things that are useful in life; and also of the first inventor of music, who is called, 'The father of all such as handle the harp and organ.' All these lived in that space of time which intervened between the creation and the deluge. After this, we read, in the history of Noah, of the first plantation of vineyards, and the farther improvement of these by making wine,<sup>e</sup> which the world seems to have known nothing of before. It is more than probable also, that the art of navigation was not known, till Noah, by divine direction, framed the ark. This gave the first hint to this useful invention; which was not, for many ages, so much improved as it is in our day. The mariner's needle, and the variation of the compass, or the method of sailing by observation of the heavenly bodies, seem to have been altogether unknown by those mariners in whose ship the apostle Paul sailed;<sup>f</sup> for want of which they exposed themselves to suffer shipwreck, hoping thereby to save their lives. As to those inventions which are necessary for the improvement of knowledge, it does not appear that writing was known till Moses' time; and after this, the use of letters was brought into Greece by Cadmus. It is hence no wonder that when historians unacquainted with scripture history give some dark hints of things done before this, they are at a loss, and pretend not to give an account of things done before the deluge.<sup>g</sup> Shall we suppose, that there were so many ages as some pretend in which men lived, while they who say so give no account of things done in those ages, to be transmitted to posterity? There hence can be no ground to conclude, that the world has stood longer than the scripture-account states.<sup>h</sup> We pass by the invention of the art of printing, which has not been known in the world above three hundred years, and the many improvements which have been made in philosophy, mathematics, medicine, anatomy, chemistry, and mechanics, in the last age; and can we suppose that so many thousand ages have passed without any of these improvements? We may look, too, at the origin of idolatry among those who worshipped men, whom they called gods, that is, such persons as had been useful while they lived, or had been of great note or power in the world, or who were the first inventors of things. This being known, and the time in which they lived mentioned by some writers among the heathen as much later than the first age of the world, is a farther evidence that the earth has not stood so many years as some pretend.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. iv. 20—22.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. ix. 20, 21.

<sup>f</sup> Acts xxvii.

<sup>g</sup> The common distribution of time, into that which is *αἰών*, before the flood, and *μυθικόν*, after it, till they computed by the Olympiads, and afterwards that which they call *ιστορικόν*, the only account to be depended upon, makes this matter farther evident.

<sup>h</sup> See this argument farther improved, by those who have insisted on the first inventors of things; as Polidor. Virgil. de Rerum Inventoribus; and Plin. Secund. Hist. Mundi, lib. vii. cap. 56—60; and Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. Lucretius, though an assertor of the eternity of matter and motion, from his master Epicurus, yet proves that the world, as to its present form, had a beginning; and what he says is so much to our present argument, that I cannot but mention it. Vid. Lucret. de Rer. Nat. lib. v.

Præterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo  
Terrarum et Cœli, semperque æterna fuere;  
Cur suprà bellum Thebanum, et funera Trojæ,  
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere Poætæ?  
Quo tot facta virum toties cecidère? neque usquam  
Æternis famæ monumentis insita florent?  
Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem Summa, recensque:  
Natura est Mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit.  
Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliuntur:  
Nunc etiam augeſcunt: nunc addita navigiis sunt  
Multa: modo organici melicos peperère sonores.  
Denique Natura hæc rerum, ratioque reperta est  
Nuper; ———

It may be objected, that there has been a kind of circulation or revolution of things, with respect to men's knowing and afterwards losing, and then regaining the knowledge of some of those arts which we suppose to have been first discovered in later ages, so that they might have been known in the world many ages before. But this is to assert, without pretending to give any proof. Nothing can be inferred from a mere possibility of things, and no one who has the least degree of judgment will acquiesce in such an inference. The memory of some things, too, could never have been universally erased from the minds of men, by any devastations which might be supposed to have been made in the world. We conclude, therefore, that nothing can be reasonably objected against the account we have in scripture, of the creation of the world at first, and of its having continued that number of years, and no longer, which we believe it to have done; our belief being founded on those sacred writings which contain the only authentic records of it, and which possess sufficient authority to put to silence all those fabulous conjectures, or vain and groundless boasts, which pretend to contradict it.

*Creation effected by the Word of God's Power.*

God is said to have created all things by the word of his power. Thus the psalmist says, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.'<sup>i</sup> Some, indeed, understand this, and several other scriptures in which God is said to create all things by his word, as implying that God the Father made all things by the Son, his personal Word. This indeed is a great truth; it is expressly ascribed in such terms as these, 'All things were made by him;'<sup>k</sup> and, as was considered under a foregoing Answer,<sup>1</sup> it directly proves the divinity of Christ. Here, however, we speak of creation, as it is an effect of that power which is a perfection of the divine nature. This being called 'the word of his power,' signifies that God produced all things by an act of his power and sovereign will; so that how difficult soever the work was in itself, as infinitely superior to finite power, yet it was performed by God without any manner of difficulty. The work was as easy to him as a thought, or an act of will, is to any creature. Accordingly it is said, 'He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.'<sup>m</sup> As nothing could resist his will, or hinder his purpose from taking effect, so all things were equally possible to him. In this respect, creation differs from the natural production of things. Though things of natural production are the effects of power, yet nothing is produced by a powerful word, or, as it were, commanded into being, but that which is the effect of almighty power, as the creation of all things is said to be.

*Creation made for the Divine Glory.*

The end for which God made all things, was his own glory. It is said, 'He made all things for himself;'<sup>n</sup> that is, that he might demonstrate his eternal power and Godhead, and all those divine perfections which shine forth in this illustrious work, and so might receive a revenue of glory as the result. Not that he was under any natural necessity to do this, or would have been less happy and glorious in himself, than he was from all eternity, if he had not given being to any thing. We are far from supposing that there is any addition made hereby to his essential glory. This appears from the independence of his divine perfections. As they are not derived from the creature, so they cannot receive any additional improvement from him. The lustre of the sun is not increased by its being beheld by our eyes; nor does it sustain any real diminution, when its brightness is obscured by the interposition of any thing which hides it from us. God made the world, not that his power or wisdom might be improved by it, but that he might be admired and adored, or that his relative glory might be advanced by us, which would be the highest advantage to us. This was the great end for which he made all things.

<sup>i</sup> Psal. xxxiii. 6.  
<sup>n</sup> Prov. xvi. 4.

<sup>k</sup> John i. 3.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 209, 210.

<sup>m</sup> Psal. xxxiii. 9.



Accordingly, the whole scope and design of scripture puts us upon giving him the glory due to his name ; and incites to this by all the displays of his glory in his works.

It is, hence, a very unbecoming way of speaking, and tends very much to detract from the divine perfections, to say as a judicious writer<sup>o</sup> represents some as objecting, "that God is not so selfish, and desirous of glory, as to make the world, and all creatures therein, only for his own honour, and to be praised by men." Another writer<sup>p</sup> speaks his own sense of this matter, in words no less shocking. He says, indeed, "that God cannot really suffer any diminution of his own by our dislike, or is advanced in honour by our approbation of his dispensations ;" which, as it respects his essential glory, is an undoubted truth. Yet he speaks, in other respects, of the glory of God,—by which it is plain, he means that which is generally called his relative or manifestative glory,—in a very unbecoming manner. He says, "God, being infinitely perfect, must be infinitely happy within himself, and so can design no self-end without himself; therefore what other end can he be supposed to aim at in these things, but our good? It is therefore a vain imagination, that the great design of any of God's actions, his glorious works and dispensations, should be thus to be admired, or applauded, by his worthless creatures, that he may gain esteem, or a good word, from such vile creatures as we are. We take too much upon us, if we imagine that the all-wise God can be concerned whether such blind creatures as we are approve or disapprove of his proceedings ; and we think too meanly of, and detract from his great Majesty, if we conceive that he can be delighted with our applause, or aim at reputation from us in his glorious design, that therefore such as we should think well of him, or have due apprehensions of those attributes, by the acknowledgment of which we are said to glorify him." This is completely to divest him of all that glory which he designed from his works. But far be it from us to approve of any such modes of speaking. Though God did not make anything with a design to render himself more glorious than he was from all eternity, yet he made all things that his creatures might behold and improve the displays of his divine perfections, and so render himself the object of desire and delight, that religious worship might be excited, and that we might ascribe to him the glory which is due to his name.

We might observe also, that God created all things by his power, that he might take occasion to set forth the glory of all his other perfections, in his works of providence and grace, and particularly in the work of our redemption, all which suppose the creature brought into being. Hence his first work made way for all others, which are or shall be performed by him in time, or throughout the ages of eternity.

### *The Work of the Six days of Creation.*

We are now to consider the space of time, in which God created all things, namely, in six days. This could not have been determined by the light of nature, and therefore must be concluded to be a doctrine of pure revelation ; as also the account we have, in Gen. i., of the order in which things were brought to perfection, or the work of each day. [See note 2 Y, p. 337.] Here we cannot but take notice of the opinion of some who suppose that the world was created in an instant. They think, that this is more agreeable to the idea of creation, and more plainly distinguishes it from the natural production of things, which are brought to perfection by degrees, and not in a moment, as they suppose this work was. This opinion has been advanced by some ancient writers. And as it seems directly to contradict that account which is given by Moses, they suppose that the distribution of the work of creation into six days, is designed only to lead us into the knowledge of the distinct parts of the work, whereby they may be better conceived of, as though they had been made in the order described one after another. But this is to make the scripture speak what men please to have it, without any regard to the genuine sense and import of its words. Had it been asserted only that the first

<sup>o</sup> See Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation, p. 182.

<sup>p</sup> Whitby on Election, p. 92, 93.

matter out of which all things were formed, was created in an instant, the assertion would correspond not only with the proper notion of the work of creation, but with the literal sense of the text; for the world is said to have been created 'in the beginning,' that is, in the first point of time. Or if it had been said only that God could have brought all things to perfection in an instant, we would not have denied it. But to assert that he did so, we cannot but think an ill-grounded sense of a plain part of scripture. That which induces persons to maintain this opinion is, that they think it redounds to the glory of God, and seems most agreeable to a supernatural production of things, and to those expressions by which the work of creation is represented. In the scripture formerly quoted, for example, it is said, 'God spake, and it was done;' and that, say they, which is produced by a word's speaking, is performed in an instant. They suppose, that their notion is agreeable to the account which we have of that change which shall pass on the bodies of those who shall be found alive at the last day, which shall take place 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;'<sup>a</sup> and to some other miracles and supernatural productions, which have been instantaneous. But all this is not sufficient to support their opinion: which cannot be defended otherwise than by supposing that the express words of scripture must be understood in an allegorical sense.

There is, therefore, another account given of this matter, by some divines of very considerable worth and judgment,<sup>r</sup> which, as they apprehend, concedes as much as needs be demanded in favour of the instantaneous production of things, as most agreeable to the idea of creation, and yet does not militate against the sense of the account given in Gen. i., and that is, that the distinct parts of the creation were each produced in a moment. They say that, in the work of the first day, for example, the first matter of all things was produced in one moment; and afterwards in the same day, light was produced, in another moment, agreeably to those words, 'Let there be light, and there was light;' and, in another moment, the light was divided from the darkness; and so the work of the first day was finished. In the same manner, they say that, in the other days, in which the works were various, there were distinct acts of the divine will, or words of command given concerning the production of things, which, accordingly, were immediately produced; that there was, in several instances, belonging to the same day's work, an interval between the production of one thing and another; that, particularly, in the sixth day, there was first a word of command given by which beasts and creeping things were formed, and then another word given by which man was created; and that there was an approbation of the former part of this day's work when God said, 'that it was good,'<sup>s</sup> before the general approbation at the end of the day was given, when 'God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.'<sup>t</sup> Now there is nothing in this opinion—the main reason and foundation of which has been already stated—which can be much disliked. Nor is it very material whether it be defended or opposed. I think they speak with the greatest prudence, as well as temper, who reckon this among the number of those questions, which are generally called problematical, that is, such as may be either affirmed or denied, without any great danger of departing from the faith.<sup>u</sup> Indeed, I cannot see that the reasons assigned, which induce persons to adhere to either side of the question with so much warmth as to be impatient of contradiction, are sufficiently conclusive. The main objection brought against their opinion who plead for an instantaneous production of things in each day, is, that for God to bring the work of each day to perfection in a moment, and afterwards not to begin the work of the next day till the respective day began, infers God's resting each day from his work; while he is not said to rest till the whole creation was brought to perfection. But I cannot see this to be a just consequence, or sufficient to overthrow the opinion. God's resting from his work when the whole was finished, means principally his not producing any new species of creatures, and not merely his ceasing to produce what he had made. Such a rest as the latter might as well be affirmed of his finishing the work of each day on the supposition that he took up the whole space of a day in performing it, as on the supposition that he finished it in a moment.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 52.  
<sup>t</sup> Ver. 31.

<sup>r</sup> See Turret. Theol. Elenct. Tom. i. Loc. 5. Quest. 5.

<sup>s</sup> Gen. i. 25.

<sup>u</sup> Vid. Witsii in Symbol. Exercit. 8. § 66.



On the other hand, it is objected against the common opinion relating to God's bringing the work of each day to perfection by degrees, so as to take up the space of a day in doing it, that it is not agreeable to the idea of creation. This, however, is no just way of reasoning, nor sufficient to overthrow the opinion. We generally conclude, that God's upholding providence, which some call, as it were, a continued creation, is no less an instance of divine and supernatural power than his producing them at first. This is not performed in an instant; yet it is said to be done, 'by the word of his power.'<sup>x</sup> Besides, there are some parts of the creation, which, from the nature of the thing, could hardly be produced in an instant; particularly those works which were performed by motion, which cannot be instantaneous, as the dividing of the light from the darkness, and the gathering of the waters into one place, that the dry land should appear. And if such a work took up more than a moment, why may it not be supposed to have taken up the space of a day? On the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that though it is certain that spirits, such as angels or the souls of our first parents, could not be otherwise created than in an instant, inasmuch as they are immaterial, and so do not consist of parts successively formed; yet none ought to determine, with too great peremptoriness, that other works, performed in the six days, must each have been performed in an instant, or that otherwise the work of making them could not properly be called a creation. The commonly received opinion seems as probable as any which has hitherto been advanced; for it is equally if not more agreeable to the express words of scripture.

Here we shall give a brief account of the work of the six days, as it is contained in the first chapter of Genesis. In the first day, the first matter out of which all things were produced, was created out of nothing. [See Note 2 Z, page 340.] This is described as being 'without form,' that is, not in that form which God designed to bring it into; for, in other respects, matter cannot be without all manner of form, or those dimensions which are essential to it. And as matter was created without form, so it was without motion. Hence, as God is the Creator of all things, so he is the first Mover. I am far from thinking, however, that all which God did, in the creation of things, was to put every thing in motion; or that his doing this brought all the parts of the creation into their respective form. As an artificer may be said to frame a machine, which, by its motion, will, without his giving himself any farther trouble, produce other things which he designed to make by the help of it, so some suppose that, by those laws of motion which God impressed upon matter at first, one part of the creation brought another into the various forms which they afterwards attained.<sup>y</sup> The first thing which was produced, and which was a farther part of the six days' work, was light. Concerning this, many have advanced their own ill-grounded conjectures. There are some writers among the Papists who have supposed, that it was a quality without a subject;<sup>z</sup> which is an obscure and indefensible way of speaking. Others have thought that by light we are to understand the angels. But to adopt this interpretation is to strain the sense of words too far, by having recourse to a metaphor; and it is inconsistent with what immediately follows, that 'God divided the light from the darkness.' It seems most probable that nothing is intended by the light but those lucid bodies which, on the fourth day, were collected into the sun and fixed stars. Let me add, that it is more than probable that God, on the first day, created the highest heaven, which is sometimes called his throne, together with the angels, its glorious inhabitants. Moses, in his history of the creation, it is true, is silent as to this matter; unless it may be inferred from these words, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' But, as was formerly observed, something else

<sup>x</sup> Heb. i. 3.

<sup>y</sup> This is the main thing which is advanced by Des Cartes, in his philosophy, which formerly obtained more in the world than it does at present; though there are several divines, in the Netherlands, who still adhere to, and defend that hypothesis. This was thought a sufficient expedient of defence against the absurdities of Epicurus and his followers, who suppose, that things attained their respective forms by the fortuitous concourse of atoms. Nevertheless, it is derogatory to the Creator's glory, inasmuch as it sets aside his immediate efficiency in the production of things.

<sup>z</sup> This absurd opinion the Papists are very fond of, inasmuch as it serves their purpose in defending the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

seems principally to be intended by the words. Yet we have sufficient ground, from what is said elsewhere, to conclude, that they were created in the beginning of time, and consequently on the first day. 'When God laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'<sup>a</sup> Here the angels are represented as celebrating and adoring those divine perfections which were glorified in the beginning of the work of creation. We may infer, therefore, that they were, at that time, brought into being.

On the second day, God divided that part of the world which is above, from that which is below, by an extended space. This is styled the firmament; it is also called heaven, though distinguished from the highest heaven, or the heaven of heavens. By this the waters which are above, are separated from those which are below, that is, the clouds from the sea and other waters which are in the bowels of the earth. Some conjecture from this fact, and especially from the words of the psalmist, 'Praise him, ye waters, that are above the heavens,'<sup>b</sup> that there is a vast collection of super-celestial waters, which have no communication with those that are contained in the clouds. This, however, seems to be an ungrounded opinion, not agreeing well with those principles of natural philosophy which are received in the present age, though maintained by some of the ancient Fathers. They found it principally on the sense in which they understand this text; and they do not give a tolerable account of the design of providence in collecting and fixing waters above the heavens.<sup>c</sup> Nothing, then, seems to be intended in that text, but the waters which are contained in the clouds; as it is said, 'He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds.'<sup>d</sup> Indeed, the Hebrew words seem not to be justly translated; <sup>e</sup> for they ought to be rendered, 'Ye waters that are from above in the firmament,' not 'above the heavens,' but above the earth, or at a considerable distance from it, in the firmament, as the clouds are.

On the third day, the sea and rivers were divided from the earth, and the dry land appeared; and the earth brought forth herbs, grass, trees, and plants, with which it is so richly stored, and which, in a natural way, it has produced ever since.

On the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars, were made, to enlighten, and, by their influence, as it were, to enliven the world, and so render that a beautiful place which, without them, would have been a dismal and uncomfortable dungeon. Hereby also the four seasons of the year were placed in their respective courses, and their due measures set to them. Accordingly, it is said, these heavenly bodies were appointed 'for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years.'<sup>f</sup> Some have inquired, whether any countenance is hereby given to judicial astrology, or whether the heavenly bodies have any influence on the conduct of human life. The affirmative of this some ancient and modern writers have defended, not without advancing many absurdities, derogatory to the glory of providence, as well as contrary to the nature of second causes and their respective effects. When the moral actions of intelligent creatures are said to be pointed at or directed by the stars, the assertion is contrary to the laws of human nature, or the nature of man as a free agent. Whatever be the sense of these words of scripture, it is certain they give no countenance to the presumptuous and ungrounded practice of astrology. This we shall take occasion to oppose, under a following Answer, when we

<sup>a</sup> Job xxxviii. 4, 7.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxlviii. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Ambrose, in his Hexameron, lib. ii. cap. 3. as well as Basil, and others, suppose, that the use of the super-celestial waters is to qualify the extraordinary heat of the sun, and other celestial bodies, to prevent their burning the frame of nature, and especially their destroying this lower world. Others think that they are reserved in store, to answer some particular ends of providence, when God, at any time, designs to destroy the world by a deluge. They consequently conclude, that it was by a supply of water thence, that there was a sufficient quantity poured down, when the world was drowned, in the universal deluge. But though a late ingenious writer [Vid. Burnet. Tellur. Theor. lib. i. cap. 2.] supposes that the clouds could afford but a small part of that water which was sufficient to answer that end, which he supposes to be eight times as much as the sea contains; yet he does not think fit to fetch a supply of it from the super-celestial stores, not only as supposing the opinion to be ill-grounded, but being at a loss to determine how these waters should be disposed of again, which could not be accounted for any other way but by annihilation, since they could not be exhaled by the sun, or contained in clouds, by reason of their distant situation, as being far above them.

<sup>d</sup> Job xxvi. 8.

<sup>e</sup> It is not *מעל רקיע*, but *מעל לרקיע*.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. i. 7.



consider judicial astrology as forbidden in the first commandment.<sup>5</sup> All we shall add at present, is, that when the heavenly bodies are said to be appointed 'for times and seasons,' &c. nothing is intended, but that they distinguish the times and seasons of the year; or that, perhaps, in a natural way, they have some present and immediate influence on the bodies of men, and some other creatures below them.

There is another question which generally occurs when persons treat of this subject, namely, whether there are not distinct worlds of men, or other creatures, who inhabit some of those celestial bodies, which by late observations, are supposed to be fitted to receive them. This has been maintained by Kepler, Bishop Wilkins, and other ingenious writers. That which has principally led them to assert it, is, that some of the heavenly bodies are, as is almost universally allowed, not only larger than this earth, but seem to consist of matter not much unlike to it, and hence, are no less fit to be the abodes of distinct worlds of intelligent creatures. They add, in defence of their argument, that it cannot reasonably be supposed that there should be such a vast collection of matter created with no other design than to add to the small degree of light which the planets, the moon excepted, afford to this lower world. As for any other advantage that they are of to it, farther than as they are objects to set forth the wisdom and power of God, we cannot determine it. They hence conclude that they were formed in order to be inhabited. Some carry their conjectures beyond this, and suppose that, as all the fixed stars are bodies which shine, as the sun does, with their own unborrowed light, and are vastly larger, there is some other use designed by them than that which this world receives from them, namely, to give light to some worlds of creatures which are altogether unknown to us. According to this supposition, there are not only more worlds than ours, but multitudes of them, in proportion to the number of the stars, which are inhabited either by men, or some other species of intelligent creatures; and this theory tends exceedingly, in the opinion of those who entertain it, to advance the power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator. The only thing that I shall say concerning it is, that as, on the one hand, the common method of opposition to it is not, in all respects, sufficient to overthrow the argument in general, especially when men pretend not to determine what kinds of intelligent creatures inhabit these worlds, and when they are not too peremptory in their assertions about this matter; so, on the other hand, when the advocates of the theory defend it with such a warmth as if it were a necessary and important article of faith, and not only assert the possibility, or at least the probability of the truth of it, but speak with as much assurance of it as though it were founded in scripture, and when they conclude that the heavenly bodies are inhabited by men, and pretend not only to describe the form of some of these worlds, but to give such an account of the inhabitants of them as if they had learned it from one who came down from them,<sup>1</sup> they expose the theory which they defend to contempt, and render it justly exceptionable. But if men do not exceed those due bounds of modesty which should always attend such disquisitions, and distinguish things which are only probable from those which are demonstratively certain, and reckon their theory no other than an ingenious speculation, which may be affirmed or denied in common with some other astronomical or philosophical problems, without considering it as affecting any article of natural or revealed religion, I would not oppose the theory in general, how much soever I would do its particular explanation. When it is brought in, as a matter of debate, to theological schools, and disputed with as much warmth as if it were next to a heresy to deny it, I cannot but express as much dislike to it as any have done who adopt the commonly received opinion.

On the fifth day, creatures endowed with sense, as well as life and motion, were produced, some out of the waters, and some out of the earth mixed with the waters,

g See vol. ii. Quest. cv.

h Thus the learned Witsius, in *Symbol. Exercitat.* 8. § 78, exposes this notion, by referring to a particular relation given by one of mountains, valleys, seas, woods, and vast tracts of land, which are contained in the moon, and as describing the men that inhabit it, and the cities that are built by them, and other things relating hereto, which cannot be reckoned, in the opinion of sober men, any other than fabulous and romantic.

namely, the fish that were designed to live in the waters, and the winged fowl which were to fly above them.<sup>i</sup>

On the sixth day, all sorts of beasts and creeping things, with which the earth is plentifully furnished, were produced out of it. As there are two words used to set forth the different species of living creatures, as contradistinguished from creeping things, namely, the cattle and the beasts of the earth, it is generally supposed that the terms imply the different sorts of beasts, the tame and the wild; though wild beasts were not, at first, so injurious to mankind as they are now. In the latter part of the day, when this lower world was brought to perfection, and furnished with every thing necessary for his entertainment, man, for whose sake it was made, was created out of the dust of the ground. This, however, will be more particularly considered in a following Answer.<sup>k</sup>

God having thus produced all things in the order and method stated in scripture, fixed or established the course or laws of nature, whereby the various species of living creatures might be propagated, throughout all succeeding ages, without the interposition of his supernatural power in a continued creation of them. After this, he rested from his work, when he had brought all things to perfection.

Having thus considered the creation, as a work of six days, it may farther be inquired, Whether it can be determined, with any degree of probability, in what time or season<sup>l</sup> of the year all things were created? Some are of opinion, that it was in the spring; because, at that time, the face of the earth is renewed every year, and all things begin to grow and flourish.<sup>m</sup> Some of the Fathers have assigned as another reason for this opinion, that the Son of God, the second Adam, suffered and rose from the dead, whereby the world was, as it were, renewed, at the same time of the year. But this argument is of no weight. The most probable opinion is, that the world was created at that season of the year, which generally brings all things to perfection, when the fruits of the earth are fully ripe, and the harvest ready to be gathered in. This is about autumn; the earth being then stored with plenty of all things for the support of man and beast. It is not, indeed, very material, whether this point can be determined or not. Yet the opinion I have stated seems to be the more probable that the beginning of the civil year was fixed at that time. Accordingly, 'the feast of ingathering,' which was at this season of the year, is said to be 'in the end of the year.'<sup>n</sup> Now as one year ended, so the other began, at this time; and thus the reckoning continued, till, by a special providence, the beginning of the year was altered, in commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. From that time, there was a known distinction among the Jews, between the beginning of the civil and that of the ecclesiastical year. The former was the same as it had been from the beginning of the world, and answers to our month September. It is more than probable, therefore, that the world was created at that season of the year.

### *The Quality of Creation.*

We now proceed to consider the quality or condition in which God created all things. They were, at first, pronounced by him 'very good.'<sup>o</sup> It is certain, nothing imperfect can come out of the hand of God; and the goodness of things is their perfection. Every thing which was made, was made exactly agreeable to the idea or platform of it which was laid in the divine mind. All things were good, that is perfect, in their kind; and therefore there was not the least blemish in the work. Every thing was beautiful, as it was the effect of infinite wisdom, as

<sup>i</sup> This, supposing the fowl to be produced out of the water, mixed with earth, reconciles the seeming contradiction that there is between Gen. i. 20, and chap. ii. 19; in the former of which it is said, the fowl were created 'out of the water,' and in the latter, 'out of the earth.'

<sup>k</sup> See Quest. xvii.

<sup>l</sup> When we speak of the season of the year, we have a particular respect to that part of the year in which man at first resided; being sensible that the seasons of the year vary, according to the different situation of the earth.

<sup>m</sup> ————— Ver ilud erat; ver magnus agebat

<sup>n</sup> Orb. et hybernis parcebant flatibus Euri.

<sup>o</sup> Gen. i. 31.

<sup>n</sup> Exod. xxiii. 16.

Virg. Georg. 2.



well as almighty power. Whatever blemishes there are now in the creation, which are the consequence of the curse that sin has brought upon it, were not in it at first. To suppose that they were would be a reflection on the Author of creation. There is another matter also, in which the goodness of those things consisted,—they were adapted to show forth the glory of God in an objective way, whereby intelligent creatures might, as in a glass, behold the infinite perfections of the divine nature which shine forth in them.

If any inquire, whether God could have made things more perfect than he did? We may easily reply, that he never acted to the utmost of his power.' The perfections of creatures were limited by his will. Yet if any persons pretend to find any flaw or defect of wisdom in the creation of all things, what they allege is no other than a proud and ignorant cavil, which men, through the corruption of their nature, are disposed to make against the great Creator of all things. They regard not the subserviency of things to answer the most valuable ends, and to advance his glory, who 'in wisdom has made them all.'

In the sense we have stated, the inferior parts of the creation were good. But, if we consider the intelligent part of creation, angels and men, they were good in a higher sense. As there was no moral blemish in the creation, nor propensity or inclination to sin, so these were endowed with a kind of goodness whereby they were fitted to glorify God, in a way agreeable to their superior natures, and to behold and improve those displays of the divine perfections which were visible in all his other works. This leads us to consider what is said concerning them, as the most excellent part of the creation.

[NOTE 2 Y. *The Six Days of Creation.*—Since Dr. Ridgeley wrote, an opinion has sprung up, and is now extensively propagated, that the six days mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis were epochs, or extended periods. On the supposition that the days were of a literal character, the computation of Archbishop Usher fixes the date of creation four thousand and four years before the Christian era. According to the discoveries and calculations of many modern geologists, however, the age of the world appears to reach far beyond that date. Not a few philosophers, or persons imbued with infidelity, have identified the literal exposition of the six days with the Mosaic narrative itself, and, with great viciousness of reasoning, have constructed, on the discrepancy between the Usurian and the geological computation, an argument against the credibility of the inspired record. There are two ways in which their sophistry is met: either the inferences from geological phenomena are denied; or the literal interpretation of the six days is shown to be inaccurate. If, say those who adopt the former method,—if we saw one of Adam's bones, we should, according to the reasoning of modern geologists, conclude that it existed originally in a soft fibrous state, and afterwards gradually became cartilage, and finally hardened into its present compact condition; or if we saw one of the trees which first existed, we should, according to the same reasoning, conclude that, on account of its resembling in every respect any tree of its species which has since been produced, it sprang originally from a seed, and vegetated during many years before arriving at maturity; yet we know that the bone of Adam, and we may infer that the original tree of each species, was created, or fixed in its mature condition in an instant. Hence, say they, though the substances termed secondary and tertiary formations, or substances in the earth's structure which are supposed to have been gradually and slowly formed, may as clearly result, in the ordinary course of things, from the operation of the laws of chemistry, as bones and trees result from the processes of ossification and lignification, we may as firmly regard them to have been originally the work of a moment, as the bones of Adam or the parent stock of any species of tree. This reasoning deprives the infidel of his geological data, or shows that they are utterly inapplicable to the purposes of his argument. The other method to which I referred of confronting him, admits the geological data, but demonstrates their perfect accordance with the Mosaic narrative. They who adopt it say that the work of creating the materials of the world, or of making them out of nothing, was 'in the beginning,' or before the 'six days' commenced; and that the work of fashioning them into their eventual or matured form, was properly a work of divine providence, or, as some have expressed it, of continued creation, and extended through six epochs, and accorded in its phenomena with all the real discoveries and sober deductions of geology. The pivot on which the whole of this opinion, and of the arguments connected with it, turns, is the import of the word translated 'day,' in the first chapter of Genesis. We hence think it a matter of importance to show that the word has, or may have, there the sense of an extended period; and, by showing this, we effectually silence all deductions and vauntings of infidels as to the supposed age of the world.

The phrase, 'The evening and the morning were a day,' occurs six times, and in an uniform manner. That it is to be understood in a sense peculiar to the connexion in which it stands, and not in the sense of a literal day, and a literal evening and morning, appears from those passages in the narrative which speak of the creation of light, and of bodies to divide the night from the day. The evening and the morning, it is said, 'were a day.' Now, though a day can, philosophically speaking, be distinguished apart from the fact of an alternation of light and darkness; yet, not even philosophically, indeed in no sense whatever, can any idea be formed of evening and morning apart from that fact. Evening,

or night, understand it as we may, implies the fact of darkness; and morning, or day, as distinguished from night, implies the fact of light. Now, light did not beam upon our world till the period of the first day, or first evening and morning was in progress. 'And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.' If it be said that the mere pouring of light upon our world constituted the period of the event 'morning,' and the period preceding it 'evening,' we shall still find difficulty in understanding the morning and evening so constituted in a literal sense, or otherwise than in the sense of an epoch. But what shall be said as to the 'setting of lights in the firmament to divide the day from the night?' Was not this the creation of the means by which literal morning and evening, or diurnal alternation of darkness and light, is produced? Yet this was the work of the fourth 'day.' 'And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night. And God made two great lights; the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.' Now—apart from the exposition of the passage, as to its meaning the actual or the relative creation of the heavenly bodies, the bringing of them into existence, or, as seems to be the fact, and, at the same time, consistent with the sense of the Hebrew words, the bringing of them into use, as regards our world, and the particular purposes specified—is it not apparent that, understand it as we may, it employs the words 'day' and 'night' in the sense in which they are popularly used,—in the sense which a literal interpretation would impose on the words in the narrative, 'the evening and the morning,'—in a sense, therefore, altogether different from that of the word 'day,' in the phrase, 'the evening and the morning were a day?' Three of such 'days' as this phrase designates had transpired before the epoch of diurnal alternation between light and darkness, or division into 'day and night,' or literal 'evening and morning,' began. What inference can we draw hence, but that 'the day' of 'the evening or morning,' 'the day,' into six of which the period of the narrative is distributed, was not a literal day, but an epoch, or extended period?

The words which we translate, 'the evening and the morning were the first day, may more literally be rendered, 'there was evening and there was morning, one day.' Josephus says concerning them (*Antiquities*, Book I. chap. i. sect. 1.): 'This was indeed the first day; but Moses said it was *one day*. The reason of this I am able to give even now; but, having promised to give such reasons for all things in a separate treatise, I shall put off the exposition of it till then.' He clearly regarded the phrase, 'one day,' יום אחד, as bearing, in the connexion in which it here occurs, a peculiar and distinguishing sense; for he could not have talked of assigning a reason for it, as of something difficult, or, at least, as of something which was not obvious to every reader, or which required special mention, had he understood the phrase to designate a literal day. The numeral אחד, it is certain, has, in various parts of scripture, the signification or force of 'special' or 'peculiar,'—designating the object which it qualifies to be distinguished, in peculiarity of character, from all others of its kind. One or two instances will serve sufficiently for illustration. 'My dove, my undefiled is *one*; she is the *one* of her mother; she is the choice (one) of her that bare her,' Cant. vi. 9. 'Then I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold, there stood before the river *one ram*, which had horns; and the horns were high; but the one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last,' Dan. viii. 3. 'Thus saith the Lord, An evil, *an one evil*, is come.' Who can doubt that, in these passages, the qualifying word 'one' has emphatically the sense of 'peculiar' or 'special'? Or who could find fault if, in the light of them, the words of Moses, instead of 'the evening and the morning were the first day,' should be translated, 'the evening and the morning were a peculiar day,'—a day distinct in its character from what the word 'day' usually denominates?

That the word יום is frequently, and, indeed, somewhat currently, used in scripture, to denote a period of considerable, and even of indefinite length, is a matter easy of proof. In the very first instance in which it occurs after the history of the creation, it signifies the entire period of the 'six days.' 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, *in the day* that the Lord made the earth and the heavens,' Gen. ii. 4. In Bildad's description of the calamitous life of a wicked man, it denotes the whole of the active or characteristic portion of a man's lifetime: 'They that come after him shall be astonished at *his day*,' Job. xviii. 20. In the song of the Jewish captives, it appears to denote the seventy years of the captivity, or the entire period of calamity over Jerusalem: 'Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom *in the day* of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof,' Psal. cxxxvii. 7. In the divine denunciation, through Isaiah, of the Israelites' contempt of God's law, it signifies indefinitely all future time: 'Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the *future day*, ליום אחרון, for ever and ever; that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord,' Isa. xxx. 8, 9. In the very numerous passages, in the prophets and elsewhere, in which the phrases 'that day,' 'the day of the Lord,' 'the latter day,' occur in connexion with intimations of the first advent and the mediatorial reign of the Messiah, it usually signifies either the period of prosperity and triumph in the church, or the whole period of the Christian dispensation. But why multiply instances? or why adduce parallel ones from the scriptures of the New Testament? Any person who makes careful inquiry, can hardly fail to be satisfied that epoch, an extended period of unique character, or even a period of indefinite duration, is a frequent scriptural sense of the word 'day.' There is, hence, no difficulty, no departure from the usual rules of exposition, in understanding the word in that sense as it occurs in the history of the creation.

I am aware of only two objections which require any notice. One of these is, that the word 'day,' in the Mosaic narrative, is distinctly defined by 'the evening and the morning,' and determined by them to be the literal solar day. But if the word 'day' itself be used in an epochal sense,



the words 'evening' and 'morning' must necessarily be understood in a sense to correspond. Both are frequently employed in scripture, with merely a figurative allusion to the commencement of light or the approach of darkness, to designate considerable periods; or they are used, with the same allusion as any epochal 'day' with which they correspond, to denote the commencement and the close of such a day. In Job's description of man's mortality, the phrase, 'from morning to evening,' denotes the whole period of a man's lifetime,—the morning denoting, by implication, the commencement of life, and 'the evening' its close. 'How much less' doth God put trust 'in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed *from morning to evening*; they perish for ever, without any regarding it,' Job iv. 19, 20. A similar phrase in the prophecies of Daniel appears to be so employed that 'the evening and the morning' denote respectively the commencement and the close of an epochal day, or period of years: 'And the vision of *the evening and the morning* which was told is true. wherefore, shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days,' Dan. viii. 26. In a passage in Ecclesiastes, the words appear, as in the passage in Job, to denote respectively the commencement and the close of the active period of a man's life: '*In the morning* sow thy seed, and *in the evening* withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good,' Eccles. xi. 6. In one of the many passages in which 'that day' designates the period of the Christian dispensation, the word 'evening' is so used as to illustrate how the epochal sense of it and that of the word 'day' correspond: 'It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark; but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass, that *at evening time* it shall be light,' Zech. xiv. 7. Instances, too, might be quoted of 'evening' or 'morning' being used by itself in the same epochal sense as the word 'day.' We shall quote only two: 'And the coast shall be for the remnant of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down *in the evening*, for the Lord their God shall visit them,' Zeph. ii. 7. '*The morning* is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near,' Ezek. vii. 7. Is it not apparent, then, that the sense of the words 'evening' and 'morning' follows the sense of the word 'day'; that when the latter is epochal, so is the former; and that, when 'evening' and 'morning' are, in the epochal sense, correlative with day, the one denotes the commencement, and the other the termination of a period of unique character? What, therefore, could more appropriately denote the commencement and the close of each epochal day of the world's formation—the commencing period of darkness or disorder, as to what was done, and the concluding period of light and maturity, in which it was all 'very good'—than to call them 'the evening and the morning of the day'?

But it is further objected, that 'the seventh day,' in connection with its being the basis of the Sabbath institution, must have been a literal day; and that, therefore, 'the six days' were also literal or solar days. Now, that the seventh day was the basis of the Sabbath institution, is clear; but its being so appears to prove, not that the days were literal, but that they were epochal. The Sabbath institution, it is to be remembered, is simply the institution of sacred rest from labour,—of cessation from secular work and engagement in devotional. Among the Jews, not only every seventh *day*, but every ecclesiastical seventh *month*, every seventh *year*, every cycle of seven times seven years, in fact, every festival, whether of short or long continuance, at near or at remote intervals, was a Sabbath. 'This shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all; it shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever,' Lev. xvi. 29, 31. 'I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall even live in them: moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them,' Ezek. xx. 11, 12. 'Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord. Six years shalt thou sow thy field, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then thou shalt cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; and ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof,' Lev. xxv. 2—4, 8—10. Now, all the Sabbath institutions of epochs and cycles of years, to which these and similar passages refer, were founded on the original period of rest from the work of creation, as truly as the Sabbath institution of the seventh calendar day. The principle of all was a fixed period, whether day, season, year, or remote interval of holy rest, preceded by a longer period of employment in secular labour; and this principle, so general as to apply alike to a seventh day, to an annual period of consecutive days, to a seventh year, and to every year following 'a week of Sabbaths,' seems to be the only one applicable to the blessing of the paradisaic seventh day, as preceded by the six days of creation. The connexion is essentially one of epochs,—an epoch of secular work succeeded by an epoch of sacred rest. Hence even the heavenly state,—where the ransomed have 'ceased from their labours, and their works do follow them,' and which is more than once described by allusion to paradise—is called *σαββατισμος*, the keeping of a Sabbath, Heb. iv. 2. Theological writers who understand the original or paradisaic 'seventh day' as a literal day of twenty-four hours, have, in some instances, felt so hard pressed by the inconveniences of their opinion, as to adopt the very questionable conclusion, that our first parents were tempted and fell on the very next day, or within some thirty-six hours of their creation. But if the original seventh day be understood as epochal—as the period of the world's holy rest, and of its exhibition of all its properties and all its inhabitants as 'very good,' consequent on six preceding epochs of active progressive movement toward maturity—it is seen to be at once the period, whether long or short, of the paradisaic condition, the basis of all the

varieties of Sabbathic institutions which were afterwards established, and a fit emblem of the rest of the redeemed in heaven from the labours and scenes of the present life. How graphic, too, on this interpretation, is the Mosaic account of the original seventh day: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made. And God *blessed the seventh day and sanctified it*; because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had made.' Doubtless, as the fourth commandment instructs us, God blessed and hallowed the literal Sabbath, and did so with special allusion to the basis on which the Sabbathic institution rested: but, in the first instance, he 'blessed and sanctified' the whole paradisaic epoch,—he displayed throughout it his moral glory, his special love, his peculiar favour to man,—he made it all a period of delight and excellence and manifestation of heavenly bliss,—he emphatically 'blessed and sanctified' it as the epoch of the world's sacred rest, and of its being all 'very good.' No violence, then, appears to be done to the connection of the original 'seventh day' with the weekly Sabbath, while due regard is had to its connexion with all seasons of holy rest, with the Sabbatic year, with the cycle of a week of Sabbaths, and with 'the Sabbath-keeping,' the *σαββατισμος* of the redeemed in heaven, if it be understood to mean the period of the world's beauty and excellence,—the period of the paradisaic state. Arriving at this conclusion, we see, in the character of 'the seventh day,' a direct argument that 'the six days' preceding it were not literal solar days, but epochs or extended periods.—*Ed.*]

[NOTE 2 Z. *The Time of Creating out of Nothing.*—There is, in the definition of the work of creation, contained in the second of the Answers which Dr. Ridgeley is here discussing, an error which he does not formally notice, and only partially rectifies. The answer says, 'The work of creation is that wherein God did, in the beginning, by the word of his power, make, *of nothing*, the world and all things therein, for himself, *within the space of six days*, and all very good.' The Hebrew word translated 'create,' *ברא*, does not necessarily or always mean, 'to make out of nothing.' We learn, however, from a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it has that meaning in the first verse of the Bible: 'Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear,' Heb. xi. 3. Now, the work which consisted in making the heavens and the earth out of nothing, took place, not 'within the space of six days,' but 'in the beginning,' before the peculiar work of even the first day began. Nor were 'all things' made out of nothing, but only 'the heavens and the earth' at that period. Our Bible gives information regarding only our own world; and so far as it refers to other parts of the universe, it mentions them, not in their intrinsic character, but simply in their relation to our earth. When it is stated, as part of the work of the fourth day, that 'God made two great lights; the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night; he made the stars also,' we are not to understand the words as meaning more than that the heavenly bodies were then made subservient to the purposes which the context specifies, or that they then, through a change in the character of our atmosphere, became fully visible from our world, and poured upon its surface their clear, full rays of light. The word translated 'made,' is not the same as that translated 'create;' but one which is often used to signify 'constituted,' 'appointed,' 'adapted to a particular use.' We see its peculiar force in the phrases, 'God made Joseph a father to Pharaoh,' 'made him lord of Egypt,' 'made the Jordan a border between the tribes,' 'made David the head of the heathen,' and in many others of similar construction. Our Bible, therefore, does not fix the date of the *creation* of the heavenly bodies; it fixes the date, or rather epoch, of only their being appointed or adapted to serve their appropriate purposes to our world; and it fixes the date of even the creation of our 'earth and heavens,' or of the solid and the aerial parts of our world, only in the general way of placing it prior to the commencement of the six epochs of progression toward maturity.

But the peculiar work of the six epochs, though not a work of creating out of nothing, but a work of acting on materials which creative power had already brought into being, was truly stupendous and strictly divine. The processes of chemical and electric agency, of vegetation, of organization, and of general physical reproduction, all display the wisdom and power of Deity. Viewed as constantly occurring, they are usually called God's works of providence; and viewed in their origin or primeval exhibition, they are popularly termed his work of creation. Exactly the phenomena which appear 'in the preserving and governing of God's creatures,' constituted the sublime wonders, the stupendous manifestations of divine energy, by which the world arose out of chaos into order and beauty. Suppose the refraction and reflection of the rays of light, the mutual influence of heat, air, earth, and water, the reproduction of inert matter in the germinating vegetable and the moving animal, and the organizing of bodies, and infusing into them the principle of life,—suppose these and other agencies of providence to be suspended; and you exhibit just the converse of what occurred when God progressively converted the chaotic mass into an inhabited and peopled world. All the energies, and influences, and physical phenomena of 'the space of six days,' continue to be constantly displayed; and as truly, in the shining of every day-beam, in the rising of every vapour, in the growth of every leaf, and in the generation of every insect, as in the events which happened when 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,' they furnish convincing proofs of the Supreme Agent's 'power and Godhead,' and solemn enforcements of his claim to be obeyed and worshipped.

'The making of all things out of nothing,' affords, however, the highest display of the Creator's glory; and is with propriety regarded as properly and alone his work of creation. This work, when correctly viewed, is far more multifarious and stupendous, than when erroneously identified with the physical events of 'the space of six days.' Before these days began, God made all the materials of our world; and ever since they ended, he has continued to make millions of glorious objects. 'In the beginning,' before the first day of the six had set in, 'God created the heaven and the earth:' he then made out of nothing, the mass of matter, 'without form and void,' which became the substance of all physical objects,—of the dry land, the sea, the air, the vegetables, the



creeping reptile, the winged fowl, and even the body of man. He next made out of nothing the soul of Adam. As regards the origin of the earth and its inhabitants, there were two acts of creation,—one in the beginning, when God made all matter; and one, on the sixth day, when he made the souls of our first parents. Now, let mind and matter be compared, the moral greatness of the former with the inert littleness of the latter, and the eternal durability of the one with the constant changeableness and coming dissolution of the other, and who will say that of the two acts of creation, that of the human soul was not the greater and the more noble? Did not God more wonderfully display his power and Godhead, when he made a moral and immortal mind, than when he made an inert and perishable planet? Yet how many millions of times since has he repeated the more glorious creation! How often does he every day make out of nothing a mind, a life, a soul which bulks more far in the magnitude of duration, and the magnitude of value, than a thousand of earthly globes!—*Ed.*]

## THE CREATION, NATURE, CHARACTER, AND EMPLOYMENT OF ANGELS.

### QUESTION XVI. *How did God create angels?*

ANSWER. God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.

THERE are two species of intelligent creatures, namely, angels and men. The former are more excellent. In this Answer, we are led to speak concerning their nature, and the glorious works which they are engaged in. But let it be premised, that the doctrine concerning them is one which we could have known little or nothing of by the light of nature. We might, indeed, have thence learned, that God has created some spiritual substances, such as the souls of men; and we might have argued from his power, that he could create other spirits, of different natures and powers, and that some of them might be without bodies, as the angels are. Yet we could not, without divine revelation, have certainly determined that there is such a distinct order of creatures. For they do not appear to us, or visibly converse with us; and whatever impressions may, at any time, be made on our spirits, by good or bad angels, in a way of suggestion, these could not have been evidently distinguished from the working of our own fancy or imagination, were we not assisted in our conceptions concerning them by what we find stated in scripture. Accordingly, it is thence that the doctrine which we are entering upon is principally to be derived. We shall consider it, as the subject of this Answer, under seven Heads.

I. There is something supposed, namely, that there are such creatures as angels. This appears, from the account we have of them, in the beginning of the creation of all things. ‘The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’<sup>p</sup> These words can be no other than a metaphorical description of them. They are called ‘the morning stars,’ as they exceed other creatures as much in glory, as the stars do the lower parts of the creation. It would be a very absurd method of expounding scripture to take the words in a literal sense; not only because the stars in the firmament do not appear to have been then created, but principally because ‘the morning stars’ spoken of are represented as engaged in a work peculiar to intelligent creatures. They are also called ‘the sons of God,’ as they were produced by him, and created in his image; yet men, who are sometimes so called, were not then created. They are likewise called elsewhere ‘spirits;’<sup>q</sup> to distinguish them from material beings, and ‘a flame of fire,’ to denote their agility and fervency in executing the divine commands. It is plain that the psalmist, in the passage referred to, intends the angels. His words are not to be translated, as some do, ‘who maketh the winds his angels, and the flame of fire his ministers,’ as denoting his making use of those creatures who act without design, to fulfil his pleasure; because the apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews,<sup>r</sup> expressly applies the passage to the angels, and renders it in the same sense as in our translation. They are elsewhere styled, ‘thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,’<sup>s</sup> to denote

p Job xxxviii. 7.

q Psal. civ. 4.

r Heb. i. 7.

s Col. i. 16.

their being advanced to the highest dignity, and employed in the most honourable services. And that it is not men whom the apostle, in using these words, speaks of, is evident; because he distinguishes the intelligent parts of the creation into visible and invisible. The visible he speaks of in the following words, in which Christ is said to be 'the Head of the body, the church.' Hence, in mentioning 'thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,' he speaks of invisible creatures advanced to these honours; and consequently he means the angels.—That there are holy angels, appears, moreover, from the fact that there are fallen angels, who are called, in scripture, devils. This is so evident, that it needs no proof. The many sins committed by their instigation, and the distress and misery which mankind is subject to by their means, give occasion to their being called 'The rulers of the darkness of this world.'<sup>u</sup> And, because of their malicious opposition to the interest of Christ, they are called 'spiritual wickedness in high places.' Now it appears, from the apostle Jude's account of them, that they once were holy. Indeed, they could not be otherwise, because they are creatures, and nothing impure can proceed out of the hand of God. While they were holy, they had their residence in heaven. This they lost, and are said 'not to have kept their first estate, but left their own habitation,' being thrust out of it, as a punishment due to their rebellion, and to be 'reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.'<sup>x</sup> Now it is plain, from scripture, that it is only a part of the angels who left their first estate. The rest are called 'holy angels;' and their number is very great. They are, accordingly, described as 'an innumerable company.'<sup>y</sup> The existence of angels is necessary to be observed against the ancient or modern Sadducees, who deny that there are either angels or spirits, whether good or bad.

II. We farther observe, that the angels are described, as to their nature, as incorporeal, and therefore called spirits. It is but a little, indeed, that we can in the present state know concerning the nature of spirits. The first ideas which we have concerning them, are taken from the nature of our souls, as, in some respects, agreeing with that of angels. Being spirits, they have a power of thinking, understanding, willing, choosing or refusing; and are the subjects of moral government, being under a law, and capable of moral good or evil, happiness or misery.

Moreover, they have a power of moving, influencing, or acting upon material beings, even as the soul moves and influences the body, to which it is united. This we understand concerning the nature and power of angels, as spirits, by comparing them with the nature of the soul. There is, indeed, this difference between them, that the souls of men are made to be united to bodies, and to act by and upon them; while angels are designed to exist and act without bodies. Yet, from the works which are often in scripture ascribed to them, it appears that they have a power to act upon material beings. As to the conjecture of some of the Fathers,<sup>z</sup> that these spirits are united to some bodies, though more fine and subtile than ours, and accordingly invisible to us, we cannot but think it a groundless conceit. To assert it, is only to pretend to be wise above what is written, and to give too great a loose to our own fancy without any solid argument.

III. It follows from their being spirits, and incorporeal, that they are immortal, or incorruptible. Nothing is subject to death or dissolution, but what is compounded of parts; for death is a dissolution of the composition of those parts which were before united. This, however, is proper to bodies. A spirit, indeed, might be annihilated; for the same power that brought it out of nothing, can reduce it again to nothing. But since God has determined that they shall exist for ever, we must conclude that they are immortal, not only from the constitution of their nature, but by the will of God.

IV. Besides the excellency of their nature, as spirits, they have other super-added endowments. Of these, three are mentioned in this Answer.

1. They were all created holy. Indeed, it could not be otherwise; since nothing impure could come out of the hands of a God of infinite purity. Creatures make themselves sinners. They were not made so by him; for, if they were, how could

<sup>t</sup> Col. i. 18.

<sup>u</sup> Eph. vi. 12.

<sup>x</sup> Jude ver. 6.

<sup>y</sup> Heb. xii. 22.

<sup>z</sup> Vid. Augustin. de Civ. Dei, lib. xv. cap. 23.

Tertull. de Idololatria et alibi passim.



he abhor sin, and punish it, as contrary to his holiness? Nor, if he had created any of the angels in a state of enmity, opposition to, or rebellion against him, could he, as he did, have approved of all his works as 'very good,'<sup>a</sup> when he had finished them.

2. They excel in knowledge, or in wisdom, which is the greatest beauty or advancement of knowledge. Accordingly, the highest instance of wisdom in men, is compared to the wisdom of an angel. Thus the woman of Tekoa, when extolling David's wisdom, though with an hyperbolical strain of compliment, compares it to that of 'an angel of God.'<sup>b</sup> This proves, that it was a generally received opinion, that angels exceed other creatures in wisdom.

3. They are said to be mighty in power. The psalmist speaks of them as 'excelling in strength ;'<sup>c</sup> and the apostle Paul, when speaking of Christ's being revealed from heaven, in his second coming, says, that it shall be 'with his mighty angels.'<sup>d</sup> And as power is to be judged of by its effects, the great things which they are sometimes represented as having done, in fulfilling their ministry in defence of the church, or in overthrowing its enemies, is a certain evidence of the greatness of their power. Thus we read of the whole Assyrian host, consisting of 'an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men,' having been destroyed in one night, not by the united power of an host of angels, but by one of them. 'The angel of the Lord' did it. [See note 3 A, p. 346.] But the power of angels will more evidently appear, when, under a following head, we speak of the ministry of angels.

V. These natural or superadded endowments, how great soever they are, comparatively to those of other creatures, are subject to certain limitations. Their perfections are derived, and therefore are finite. It is true, they are holy, or without any sinful impurity ; yet even their holiness falls infinitely short of God's. Accordingly, it is said concerning him, 'Thou only art holy.'<sup>e</sup> And elsewhere, 'concerning the angels, who are, by a metonymy, called 'the heavens,' it is said, 'they are not clean in his sight ;' that is, their holiness, though perfect in its kind, is but finite, and therefore infinitely below his who is infinitely holy.

Moreover, though they are said, as was before observed, to excel in knowledge, we must, notwithstanding, conclude, that they do not know all things. Their wisdom, when compared with God's, deserves no better a character than that of 'folly.'<sup>f</sup> 'His angels he charged with folly.' There are many things which they are expressly said not to know, or to have but an imperfect knowledge of, or to receive ideas of by degrees. Thus they know not the time of Christ's second coming ;<sup>g</sup> and they are represented as inquiring into the great mystery of man's redemption, or as 'desiring to look into it.'<sup>h</sup> Let me add, they do not know the hearts of men, at least not in such a way as God, who is said to 'search the heart ;' for that is represented as a branch of the divine glory.<sup>k</sup> Besides this, they do not know future contingencies, unless it be by such a knowledge as amounts to little more than conjecture ; or, if they attain to a more certain knowledge of future contingencies, it is by divine revelation. God appropriates this knowledge to himself, as a glory from which all creatures are excluded. Hence, he says, 'Show the things that are to come,' that is, future contingencies, 'that we may know that ye are gods.'<sup>i</sup> This implies that the knowledge of things to come is more than can be affirmed of any finite mind, even that of an angel. As to the way of their knowing things, it is generally supposed by divines that they know them not by intuition, as God does, who is said to know all things in himself by an underived knowledge. Whatever they know, is either communicated to them by immediate divine revelation, or is attained in a discursive way, by inferring one thing from another. In this respect, the knowledge of the best of creatures appears to be but finite ; and is infinitely below that which is divine.

Again, though they are said to be mighty in power, yet it is with this limitation, that they are not omnipotent. There are some things which are the effects of divine power, which angels are excluded from, as being too great for them. Accord-

a Gen. i. 31.

b 2 Sam. xiv. 20.

c Psal. ciii. 20.

d 2 Thess. i. 7.

e Rev. xv. 4.

f Job xv. 15.

g Job iv. 18.

h Matt. xxiv. 36.

i 1 Pet. i. 12.

k Jer. xvii. 10.

2 Chron. vi. 30.

1 Isa. xli. 23.

ingly they were not employed in creating any part of the world; nor do they uphold it. As it is a glory peculiar to God, to be 'the Creator of the ends of the earth,' so he, exclusively of all others, is said to 'uphold all things by the word of his power.' We may add, that we have no ground to conclude, as some of the ancient philosophers<sup>m</sup> seemed to assert, that they are employed in providence, to maintain that constant and regular motion which there is in the celestial bodies. This is the immediate work of God, without the agency of any creature being subservient to it. Again, how great soever their power is, they cannot change the heart of man, take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh, or implant that principle of spiritual life and grace in the souls of men whereby they are said to be 'made partakers of a divine nature,' or 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' This work is ascribed to the exceeding greatness of the divine power; and it is a peculiar glory belonging to the Holy Spirit, whereby believers are said to be born from above. It is therefore too great for the power of angels to effect.

VI. We have an account of the work or employment of angels. It is said, they execute the commands of God, and praise his name. Their executing his commands will be more particularly considered under a following Answer,<sup>n</sup> when we are led to speak of their being employed by God, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice. We shall now consider them as engaged in the noble and delightful work of praise. 'They praise his name.' 'For this end they were created; and, being perfectly holy and happy, they are fitted for this service, and in the highest degree devoted to it. The work of praise was begun by them as soon as ever they had a being. 'They sang together,' and celebrated God's praise in the beginning of the creation.<sup>o</sup> And when the Redeemer came into this lower world, and thereby a work more glorious than that of creation was begun by him, they celebrated his birth with a triumphant song. With the angel who brought the tidings to the shepherds, there was 'a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.'<sup>p</sup> Whether all the hosts of heaven were present at that solemnity, we know not; but there is sufficient ground to conclude, from the harmony that there is in the work and worship of the heavenly inhabitants, that they all celebrated his incarnation with their praises. This was a part of that 'worship,' which, upon this great occasion, they gave, by a divine warrant, to him who was then brought into this lower world.<sup>q</sup> Moreover, they praise God for particular mercies vouchsafed to the church, and for the success of the gospel in the conversion of sinners. They express their joy, as our Saviour observes, though it be but 'one sinner that repenteth.'<sup>r</sup> Finally, they are represented as joining in worship with the saints in heaven. For this reason the apostle, speaking concerning the communion that there is between the upper and the lower world, as well as the union between the saints departed and the angels, in this work of praise, says, 'Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'<sup>s</sup> They are represented also as joining with all others who are 'round about the throne, the number of whom is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'<sup>t</sup>

Since we cannot but suppose that this branch of that social worship in which they are engaged is performed with harmony, without which it would want a very considerable circumstance necessary to render it beautiful, and becoming a state of perfection, we must conclude that there is the greatest order among these heavenly ministers. Whether, however, they are to be considered as having a government or hierarchy among themselves, so that one is superior in office and dignity to others, or whether they have a kind of dominion over one another, or whether

<sup>m</sup> This was the opinion of Aristotle, though he does not call them angels, but intelligent beings.  
<sup>n</sup> 'Angel' is a character belonging to them, derived only from scripture; nor do we find that this work is assigned to them, as a part of their ministry therein.

<sup>o</sup> See Quest. xix.

<sup>p</sup> Job xxxviii. 7.

<sup>q</sup> Luke ii. 13, 14.

<sup>r</sup> Heb. i. 6.

<sup>s</sup> Luke xv. 7, 10.

<sup>t</sup> Heb. xii. 22, 23.

<sup>u</sup> Rev. v. 11, 12.



some are made partakers of privileges which others are deprived of, is a question we pretend not to determine. Scripture is silent on the subject. What some have laid down, as though it were deduced from it, is altogether inconclusive. Hence, they who express themselves as peremptorily on this subject as if they had received it by divine inspiration, or had been told it by some who had been conversant among the heavenly inhabitants, must be reckoned among those whom the apostle speaks of, who 'intrude into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind.'<sup>u</sup>

The papists are very fond of this notion; it being agreeable to that unscriptural hierarchy which they establish in the church on earth, and which, instead of better arguments, they pretend to be, in some respects, founded upon it.<sup>x</sup> All the countenance which they pretend to be given to it in scripture, is taken from the various characters by which the angels are described, as 'cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, archangels.' All these expressions they suppose to signify various ranks and orders among them. And when they say that there are three classes or degrees of dignity and office into which they are distributed, and that some of the characters mentioned are reduced to one, and others to another of them, their assertion is nothing but an imposition of their own chimerical fancies as matters of faith. When they speak further of some of them as being of a superior order, and admitted to greater honours than the rest, whom they compare to ministers of state who always attend the throne of princes or stand in their presence, and of others of them as being employed in particular services for the good of the church, and as ministering in this lower world, they make a distinction of which the scripture says nothing. For all the angels behold the face of God in heaven, and are in his immediate presence; and they are all likewise called 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation.' The great oracle which the papists have recourse to, where the scripture is silent, is a spurious writing which goes under the name of Dionysius, the Areopagite, concerning the Celestial Hierarchy.<sup>y</sup> This contains many things not only fabulous, but unworthy of him who was converted at Athens by the apostle Paul's ministry,<sup>z</sup> as well as discordant with the sentiments of the church in the age in which he lived. We may, therefore, treat the popish assertion respecting an angelic hierarchy, as a vain and trifling conjecture. All that we can assert on the subject is, that there is a beautiful order among the angels, though not of the nature of a hierarchy; and this appears very much in that social worship which is performed by them.

This leads us to inquire how they communicate their ideas to one another, though destitute of organs of speech, like those that men have. That they do, some way or other, impart their minds to one another, is sufficiently evident; for we cannot see how otherwise they could join together or agree in that worship which is performed by them, and in those hallelujahs with which they praise God, and so answer the end of their creation. That they converse together is also evident; for they are represented as doing so, in several places of scripture. The prophet speaks of 'the angel that talked with him.' He 'went forth, and another angel went out to meet him.'<sup>a</sup> Elsewhere it is said, concerning the angels, that one

<sup>u</sup> Col. ii. 18.

<sup>x</sup> It is strenuously maintained by Baronius, Bellarmine, and many other of their writers; as also by many of the schoolmen, as Durandus, Thomas Aquinas, and others.

<sup>y</sup> This book is sufficiently proved to be spurious, and not to have been known in the four or five first ages of the church. It is not mentioned by Jerome, Gennadius, and others, who make mention of the writers of their own and former ages, and pass their censures on them, as genuine or spurious. And from others of the Fathers, who lived in those centuries, it plainly appears, that the doctrines maintained in this book, concerning the celestial hierarchy, were not then known by the church. It is proved to be spurious also by the fact that the author of it makes mention of holy places, such as, temples, altars, &c. for divine worship, and catechumens, and the like, and many other things, unknown to the church till the fourth century. And he uses the word 'Hypostases' to signify the divine persons, which was not used till then. He also speaks of the institution of Monks, and various sorts of them; which were not known till long after the apostolic age. Yea, he quotes a passage out of Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived in the third century. These, and many other arguments to the same purpose, are maintained, not only by protestants, but by some impartial popish writers, and they sufficiently prove it spurious. See Dallæus De Scrip. Dionys. Areop. and Du Pin's History of Ecclesiastical Writers, Cent. I. pp. 32—34.

<sup>z</sup> Acts xvii. 34.

<sup>a</sup> Zech. ii. 3.

cried to another, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'<sup>b</sup> The apostle John speaks of 'an angel ascending from the east, who cried with a loud voice to four' other 'angels,'<sup>c</sup> who were performing a part of their ministry here on earth, and gave them a charge relating to it. Elsewhere he again represents one angel speaking to another, and 'crying with a loud voice,'<sup>d</sup> &c. In some of these instances, if the voices uttered by them were real, the fact may be accounted for, by supposing that they assumed bodies for the purpose, and so communicated their minds to one another in a way not much unlike to what is done by man. This, however, is not their ordinary way of conversing with one another. Yet we may infer from the fact and from many scriptures, which might be brought to the same purpose, that there is some way or other by which they communicate their thoughts to one another. How this is done, is hard to determine, whether merely by an act of willing that others should know what they desire to impart to them, or whether by some other methods. It is the safest way for us to acknowledge our ignorance on the subject, and it would be no disparagement for us to do so, were we the wisest men on earth. To attempt to determine it, is to aim at a matter which, in our present state, is much beyond our reach; for here we know little of the nature or properties of spirits, especially those that are without bodies. It is sufficient for us to conclude, that the angels converse together, when joined in social worship; but how they do this, is altogether unknown to us.

VII. Notwithstanding all the advantages which the angels had from those natural endowments with which they were created, it is farther observed that they were subject to change. Absolute and independent immutability is an attribute peculiar to God; so that whatever immutability creatures have, is by his will and power. Some of the angels who were created holy, not only were subject to change, but 'kept not their first estate,'<sup>e</sup> and, from being the sons of God, became enemies and rebels. This is an evident proof of the natural mutability of creatures, if not confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness. We have ground also to conclude from it that the rest of the angels might have fallen, as well as they, had they not been favoured with the grace of confirmation, which rendered their state of blessedness unchangeable. But this will be farther considered, under a following Answer.<sup>f</sup>

b Isa. vi. 3.    c Rev. vii. 2, 3.    d Chap. xix. 17.    e Jude ver. 6.    f See Quest. xix.

[NOTE 3 A. *The Angel who slew the Assyrian Host.*—The angel who 'smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand,' was 'the angel of the Lord,' or 'the Angel Jehovah.' Even apart from the numerous texts which identify this glorious person with 'God,' 'Jehovah,' the divine head and protector of the church, the context itself leaves little ground to doubt that he was such. 'Therefore, thus saith Jehovah, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there; for I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the Angel Jehovah went out and smote,' &c., 2 Kings xix. 32—35. Whether he employed any instrument, physical or angelic, the narrative does not say; but that he was himself, not a created Angel, but the Angel of the covenant, the Angel who redeemed Jacob from all evil, the Governor among the nations, it seems plainly to state.—ED.]

## THE CREATION OF MAN.

### QUESTION XVII. *How did God create man?*

ANSWER. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls, made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, with dominion over the creatures, yet subject to fall.

### *Why man was created last.*

IN this Answer it is observed that man was created after all other creatures. There was a sort of climax or gradation in the work of creation. That the wisdom and



power of God might be more admired in the work, he proceeded from things that were less perfect to those that were more so. Man, who is the most excellent creature in this lower world, was framed the last; for God designed by creating him, not only to give a specimen of his power, wisdom, and goodness, but that the glory of those perfections which shine forth in all his other works might be adored and magnified by him, as a creature fitted for that purpose. The bounty and goodness of God appear in man having been the last of the creatures brought into being. All other things were created before him, that the world, which was designed to be the place of his abode, should be stored with all those provisions which were necessary for his entertainment and delight, and that he might hereby be induced to give God the glory which was due to his name, and all other creatures which were formed before him, might be objects leading him to it.

*Man created Male and Female.*

As to the difference of sex, it is observed, that 'man was made male and female.' Adam was first formed; concerning whom we read, which is a humbling consideration, that his 'body was formed of the dust of the ground,' whence he took his name. This God puts him in mind of, after his fall, when he says, 'Dust thou art.'<sup>g</sup> The best of men have sometimes expressed the low thoughts they have of themselves, by acknowledging this as the origin of the human nature. Thus Abraham, when standing in the presence of God, says, 'I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord which am but dust and ashes.'<sup>h</sup> This character is considered as universally belonging to mankind, when it is said, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was.'<sup>i</sup>

As to the woman, it is said, she was formed of the rib of the man. The reason of her formation is particularly assigned, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.'<sup>k</sup> There was a garden planted for his delight, and the beasts of the earth were brought and given to him, as his property; and his sovereignty over them was expressed by his giving names to every living creature. But these were not fitted to be his companions, though designed for his use. He was, notwithstanding, alone. Hence, God, designing him a greater degree of happiness, formed one who might be a partner with him in all the enjoyments of this life, that hereby he might experience the blessing of a social life, and that, according to the laws of nature, the world might be inhabited, and its Creator glorified, by a numerous seed who should descend from him.

From Adam's being first formed, the apostle infers his pre-eminence of sex;<sup>l</sup> though not of nature. In respect to nature, the woman is designed to be a sharer with him in his present condition, and his future expectation. Concerning her being formed of a rib, or, as some understand it, out of the side of man, some curious or over-nice observations have been made, which it is needless to mention. The account which the scripture gives, is, that her being part of himself, argued the nearness of relation and unalienable affection which ought to be between man and wife. Adam observed, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh:'<sup>m</sup> and our Saviour, referring to the same thing, says, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh.'<sup>n</sup>

*Adam and Eve the First Human Beings.*

The next thing which may be observed, is, that these were the first parents of all mankind. The apostle expressly calls Adam 'the first man.'<sup>o</sup> This is very agreeable to the account which Moses gives of his creation, on the sixth day from the beginning of time. It is a truth so generally received, that it seems almost needless to insist on any proof of it. The very heathen who knew not who the first man was, or where or when he was created, allowed in general that there was one

<sup>g</sup> G n. iii. 19.    <sup>h</sup> Gen. xviii. 27.    <sup>i</sup> Eccl. xii. 7.    <sup>k</sup> Gen. ii. 18.    <sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 11—13.  
 compared with 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.    <sup>m</sup> Gen. ii. 23, 24.    <sup>n</sup> Matt. xix. 5.    <sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 45.

from whom all descended. Hence, when the apostle Paul argued with them, that 'God had made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth,'<sup>p</sup> none of them pretended to deny it.

None who own the divine authority of scripture ever questioned the account of Moses respecting the origin of the human race, till a bold writer, about the middle of the last century, published a book, in which he advanced a new and fabulous notion. He says that there was a world of men who lived before Adam was created,<sup>q</sup> and that these were all heathen. He alleges that Moses speaks of their creation as having occurred many ages before Adam,—that he speaks of their creation in the first chapter of Genesis, and of Adam's in the second chapter. He further supposes that Adam was created in some part of the world which was then uninhabited, where he was designed to live, and to be the father of the church which was to descend from him; and that, being so far remote from the rest of mankind, he knew not that there were any other men besides himself, till his family increased, and some of them apostatized from the faith, and till, in particular, Cain and his descendants 'went out from the presence of the Lord,' and dwelt among them. And whereas Adam is called by the apostle Paul, 'the first man,' this writer supposes that he is so styled only as contradistinguishing from Christ, who is called 'the second man;' the design being, according to him, to compare the person whom he supposes to have been the head of the Jewish church, with him who is the Head of the Christian church. He insists largely on and perverts that scripture where it is said, 'Until the law, sin was in the world;'<sup>r</sup> as though the sense of it were, that there was a sinful generation of men in the world, before God erected his church and gave laws to it, when he created Adam as its head and father. The apostle, in that passage, clearly speaks of sin prevailing in the world before the law was given by Moses. As to the historical account of the creation of man in scripture, it is plain that, in the first chapter of Genesis, Moses speaks of the creation of man in general, male and female, and that, in the second chapter, he gives a particular account of the same thing, and speaks of the manner of the formation of Adam and Eve. Besides, when God had created Adam, it is expressly said, that 'there was not a man to till the ground.'<sup>s</sup> There was hence no other man living; a fact which is directly contrary to this chimerical opinion. Besides, if there had been a world of men before Adam, what occasion was there for him to be created out of the dust of the ground? He might have been the father of the church, and yet descended, in a natural way, from one that was then in being. Or if God designed that he should live at a distance from the rest of the world, he might have called him from the place of his abode, as he afterwards called Abraham, without exerting power in creating him; and he might have ordered him to take a wife out of the world, without creating a woman for the purpose. It would be too great a digression, nor would it answer any valuable end, for me to take notice of every particular argument brought in defence of the notion I have stated. But though the book we speak of is not much known in the world, the notion is propagated and defended by many atheists and deists, who design by it to bring the scripture-history and religion in general into contempt. I am obliged, therefore, in opposition to them, to answer an objection or two.

If Adam was the first man, and his employment was tilling the ground, whence, it is asked, had he those instruments of husbandry which were necessary for agriculture, and other things to subserve the various occasions of life? This question may easily be answered, by supposing that he had a sufficiency of wisdom to find out every thing which was needful for his use and service, whatever improvement

p Acts xvii. 26.

q This book, which is called *Systema Theologicum*, in which this matter is pretended to be defended, was published by one Peirerius, about the middle of the last century; and, being written in Latin, was read by a great many of the learned world. As the sense of many scriptures is strained by him to defend it and hereby contempt was cast upon scripture in general, and occasion given to many, who are so disposed, to reproach and burlesque it, some have thought it worth their while to take notice of and confute this new doctrine. Afterwards, the author, either convinced of his error, as some suppose, or afraid lest he should suffer persecution for it, recanted his opinion, and turned Papist.

r Rom. v. 13.

s Gen. ii. 5.



might be made in manual arts by future ages. But the objection, though mentioned amongst others, is not much insisted on.

There is another objection which some think a little more plausible, founded on what is stated in the fourth chapter of Genesis. There we read of Cain's killing his brother Abel, which occurred a little before the hundred and thirtieth year of the world. This appears by comparing chap. v. 3. with chap. iv. 25. It is said, 'Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat Seth;' and on that occasion, his wife acknowledges it as a mercy, that 'God had appointed her another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.' Now the consequence of the murder was that 'Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod,' and that 'he built a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son Enoch.'<sup>u</sup> The objectors hence infer, that, in a little above an hundred and thirty years after the world was created, there were several colonies settled in places remote from the land of Eden, where Adam and his posterity dwelt; and that the inhabitants of those countries were of a different religion from him, otherwise Cain's living among them would not be styled his 'going out from the presence of the Lord.' It is not said, they observe, that Cain peopled that land, but that he went thither, that is, dwelt amongst its inhabitants; and they allege that it must have been by their assistance that he built the city. For it is probable, they say, that the art of building was then hardly known by our first parents and their descendants, who lived separate from the world in tents, and worshipped God in that way which they received by divine revelation, being but few in number, while other parts of the world might be as much peopled as they are at this day. Now to this objection it may be answered, that as the chimerical opinion advocated in it, sets aside or perverts the scripture-account of things, so the absurdity of it may be easily manifested. Their supposition that the number of Adam's posterity was small and inconsiderable, when Cain slew his brother and built the city before-mentioned, will appear to be an ungrounded conjecture, if the blessing, which God conferred on man in his first creation, of increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth,<sup>x</sup> took effect, as it doubtless did, and that in an uncommon degree, the necessity of things requiring it. It is not absurd to suppose, that at least as many children were generally born at a birth, and in as early an age of the mother's life, as have been or are in any uncommon instances in later ages. It is also very probable, that the time of child-bearing continued many years longer than it now does in proportion to the number of years in which the life of man exceeded its present standard. And if the age of man was extended to eight or nine hundred years, we may conclude that there were but few who died young. Let these things be taken for granted, which seem not in the least improbable, and any one who is curious in his inquiries about this matter, and desires to know what a number of people might be born in one hundred and thirty years, will find it to be so great that they might spread themselves through many countries, far distant from the place where Adam dwelt. There is, therefore, no need to suppose, that those with whom Cain dwelt in the land of Nod, were persons who lived before Adam was created. But that this may more abundantly appear, let it be farther considered, that though, immediately after the account of Abel's death, we read of 'Cain's going out from the presence of the Lord,' and his dwelling 'in the land of Nod, and building a city,' there is no reason why we should take for granted that these events happened immediately or within a few years after the murder of Abel, or about the hundred and thirtieth year of the world. Scripture contains the history of the life of Cain in a few verses, without any chronological account of the time when these things were said to be done by him. It hence seems probable, that the event occurred some hundreds of years after Cain slew Abel. We need not inquire, therefore, what a number of persons might be in the world in one hundred and thirty years, but in seven or eight hundred years; and then the world might be almost as full of people as it is now, and the greatest part of the world might be also degenerate, and strangers to the true religion, so that Cain might properly be said to go out from the presence of the Lord, and choose to live with those who

were apostates from him and served other gods. No advantage, then, is gained against the scripture-history, by those who, in contempt of it, defend the ill-grounded opinion which we have noticed. We have thus considered man as created male and female, and our first parents, as the common stock, or root, whence all descended.

### *The Constituent Parts of Man.*

We shall now take a view of the constitution or frame of the human nature, and consider the two constituent parts of man, namely, the soul and body. With respect to the former, he is, as it were, allied to angels, or, to use the scripture-expression, 'made a little lower than they.'<sup>1</sup> As to the other, which is his inferior part, namely, the body, he is 'of the earth, earthy,' and set upon a level with the lower parts of the creation.

1. We shall consider first the body of man. It was first formed before the soul; and according to the course and laws of nature, it is first fashioned in the womb, and the soul is united to it when it is organized and fitted for its reception. There are many things very wonderful in the structure of human bodies, which might well give occasion to the inspired writer to say, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'<sup>2</sup> This is a subject which would afford us much matter to enlarge on; and we might take occasion to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this part of his work. Many things might be observed from the shape and erect posture of the body, and the several conveniences which thence arise, and how we are hereby instructed that we were not born to look downwards to the earth, but up to heaven whence our chief happiness is derived. We might here consider the various parts of the body, none of which are superfluous or redundant, and their convenient situation for their respective uses; the harmony and contexture of them, and the subserviency of one part to another; and particularly, how the body is so ordered by the wisdom of the Creator, that those parts which are most necessary for the preservation of life, and which, if hurt, would occasion immediate death, are placed most inward, that they may be sufficiently defended from all external injuries which might befall them; and also the disposition of those parts which are the organs of sense, and their contexture, whereby they are fitted to exert themselves in a way most proper to answer their ends. We might also consider the temperature of the body, whereby its health and vigour are maintained; and that variety that there is in the countenances and voices of men, so great that there is hardly an exact similitude in any two persons in the world, and so beneficent in design as to subserve the general advantage of mankind. These things might have been particularly insisted on, and might have afforded many useful observations. But to enlarge on this head as it deserves, would be to divert too much from our present design. Besides, it will be very difficult for any one to treat on this subject with more advantage than it has been done by several learned and judicious writers, who, taking advantage of those improvements which have been lately made in anatomy, have set it in a much clearer light than in former ages. It is insisted on so particularly and with such demonstrative evidence by them, that I choose to refer the reader to their writings, rather than insist on it.<sup>3</sup> All that I shall farther observe is, that there is something wonderful in that natural heat which is continued in the bodies of men for so many years together, and in the motion of the heart, the circulation of the blood and juices, the continual supply of animal spirits, and their subserviency to muscular motion. These things, and many others of a similar nature, are all wonderful in the bodies of men.

It may be objected, that there are other creatures who, in some respects, excel men as to their bodies, and the powers of them,—as the vulture, and many other creatures, in quickness of sight and hearing; the dog in the sense of smelling; many others, in strength and swiftness; and some inanimate creatures, as the sun and other heavenly bodies, in beauty. We reply, that the bodies of men must be

<sup>1</sup> y Psal. viii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> z Psal. cxxxix. 14.

<sup>3</sup> a See Ray's Wisdom of God, in the Work of Creation, Part II. and Derham's Physico-Theology, Book V.



allowed to have a superior excellency, if considered as united to their souls, and rendered more capable of glorifying God, and enjoying that happiness which no creatures below them are capable of. It is true, man is not endowed with such quickness of sense, strength of body, and swiftness of motion, as many other creatures are; some of which endowments tend to the preservation of their own lives, while others are conducive to the advantage of man. But man has every thing, in the frame of his nature, necessary to his happiness, agreeable to his present station of life, and suited to his glorifying God and answering higher ends than other creatures were made for. If we judge of the excellencies of the human nature, we must conceive of man more especially as to that more noble part of which he consists. Accordingly,

2. We shall consider him as having a rational and immortal soul. This not only gives a relative excellency to the body to which it is united, and, by its union therewith, preserves it from corruption, but it uses the various organs of it, to perform actions which are under the conduct of reason. That which renders it still more excellent, is, that it is capable of being conversant about objects abstracted from matter, and of knowing and enjoying God. Whatsoever obstructions it may meet with from the temperament of the body to which it is united, or what uneasiness soever it may be exposed to from its sympathy with it, none of those things which tend to destroy the body, or separate it from the soul, can affect the soul so far as to take away its power of acting. For, when separate from the body, the soul remains immortal, and is capable of farther improvements, and a greater degree of happiness.

We might here proceed to prove the immortality of the soul; but we shall have occasion more particularly to do this, under a following Answer,<sup>b</sup> when we consider the souls of believers, as made perfect in holiness, and thereby fitted for and afterwards received into heaven, and as having, in consequence of their immortality, escaped the grave, in which the body is to be detained until the resurrection.

#### *Man Created after the Image of God.*

We proceed to consider another excellency of the human nature, as man was made after the image of God. To be made a little lower than the angels, as he is represented to be by the psalmist,<sup>c</sup> is a very great honour conferred on him. But what can be said greater of him than that he was made after the image of God? Yet, though this is a scripture-expression, denoting the highest excellency and privilege, it is to be explained consistently with that infinite distance that there is between God and the creature. The glorious character which it denotes, does not argue him to partake of any divine perfection; nor is it inconsistent with the nothingness of the best of finite beings, when compared with God. For whatever likeness there is in man to God, there is, at the same time, an infinite dissimilitude or disproportion. We formerly observed this, when we considered the difference between those divine attributes which are called incommunicable, from others which some call communicable.<sup>d</sup>

If it be inquired, wherein the image of God in man consists, it would be preposterous and absurd, to the last degree, to suppose that it has any respect to the lineaments of the body. There is a direct opposition, rather than similitude, between the spirituality of the divine nature and the bodies of men. Indeed, it would have been needless to mention this, had not some given occasion for it, by perverting the sense of those scriptures in which God, in condescension to our common mode of speaking, is represented, in a metaphorical way, as though he had a body or bodily parts. From these scriptures some have inferred, that he assumed a body at first, as a model according to which he would frame that of man. This opinion, however, is not only absurd, but blasphemous, and carries its own confutation in it. There are others who suppose that man was made after the image of Christ's human nature. This opinion, though it does not altogether contain so

<sup>b</sup> See vol. ii. Quest. lxxvi. of the Divine Attributes.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. viii. 5.

<sup>d</sup> See Section, 'General View

vile a suggestion as the former, yet is groundless and absurd. For Christ was made after the likeness of man, as to what concerns his human nature ;<sup>e</sup> and man, in that respect, was not made after his image. Let me add, that when the scripture speaks of man as made after the image of God, it plainly gives us ground to distinguish between this image and that glory which is peculiar to Christ, who is said not only to be made after his image, but to be 'the image of the invisible God,'<sup>f</sup> and the 'express image of his person.'<sup>g</sup> There is, in this respect, such a similitude between the Father and Son, as cannot, in any sense, be affirmed of the likeness which is said to be between God and the creature.

Moreover, when we speak of man's being made after the image of God, as consisting in some finite perfections communicated to him, we must carefully guard against even the remotest supposition, that he was made partaker of any of the divine perfections. It is true, the apostle speaks concerning believers, as made 'partakers of the divine nature';<sup>h</sup> but, in studying this phrase, we must take heed that we do not pervert the mind of the Holy Ghost. Nothing is intended by this expression, in which the image of God is set forth, but a sanctified nature, or, as I would rather choose to render it, 'a divine nature,' derived from, and, in some respects, conformed to him, but yet infinitely below him.

The image of God in man, as spoken of in this Answer, is said to consist particularly in three things.

1. In knowledge. This is what we generally call the natural image of God in man, which he is endowed with as an intelligent creature. Not that the degree of knowledge which the best of men are capable of, contains in it any thing properly divine, as to its formal nature; for there is a greater disproportion between the infinite knowledge of the divine mind and that of a finite creature, than there is between the ocean and a drop of water. But it signifies, that as God has a comprehensive knowledge of all things, man has the knowledge of some things, agreeable to his finite capacity, communicated to him. In this sense we are to understand the apostle's words, when he speaks of man's being 'renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.'<sup>i</sup>

2. It consists in righteousness and holiness. This some call the moral image of God in man. If we consider it as restored in sanctification, it may more properly be called his supernatural image. It consists in the rectitude of the human nature, as opposed to that sinful deformity and blemish which renders fallen man unlike to him. We must hence consider him as at first made upright,<sup>k</sup> so that there was not the least tincture or taint of sin in his nature, or any disposition or inclination to it. All the powers and faculties of the soul were disposed to answer the ends of its creation, and thereby to glorify God. Some add, that the image of God in man, consisted in blessedness; so that as God is infinitely blessed in the enjoyment of his own perfections, man was, in his way and measure, blessed in possessing and enjoying those perfections which he received from God. But, though this is true, I would rather choose to keep close to the scripture-mode of speaking, which represents the image of God in man as consisting 'in righteousness and true holiness.'<sup>l</sup>

Man, having been thus made after the image of God, is farther said, in this Answer, to have had the law of God written in his heart, and power to fulfil it. Herein God first made him, and then dealt with him as a reasonable creature, the subject of moral government. And, that this law might be perfectly understood, it was written on his heart, that hereby he might have a natural knowledge of the rule of his obedience, and might with as little difficulty be apprized of his duty to God, as he was of any thing which he knew as an intelligent creature. And as he was indispensably obliged to yield obedience to this law, and the consequence of violating it would be his ruin, God, as a just and gracious Sovereign, gave him ability to fulfil it; so that he might not, without his own fault, or by a necessity of nature, rebel against him, and so plunge himself into inevitable misery.

3. It is farther observed, that the image of God, in man, consisted in man's do-

e Phil. ii. 7.  
i Col. iii. 10.

f Col. i. 15.  
k Eccl. vii. 29.

g Heb. i. 3.  
l Eph. iv. 24.

h 2 Pet. i. 4.



minion over the creatures. This is expressly revealed in scripture, when God says, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'<sup>m</sup> The psalmist describes this dominion in other words, though not much differing as to their general import, when he says, 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.'<sup>n</sup> This dominion consisted in the right which he had to use and dispose of the inferior creatures, for his comfort and delight, and for serving him in all things necessary to the glorifying of his Creator. He had, however, no right nor inclination, in his state of integrity, to abuse them, as fallen man, in various instances, does. [See Note 3 B, below.]

### *The Fallibility of Man.*

The last thing observed in this Answer is, that, notwithstanding the advantageous circumstances in which man was created, he was subject to fall. By this we are not to understand that he was forced or compelled to fall, through any necessity of nature; for that would have been inconsistent with the liberty of his will to what was good, or that rectitude of nature whereby he was not only fitted to perform perfect obedience, but to avoid every thing which had a tendency to render him guilty before God, and thereby to ruin him. As to the devil, he had no power to force the will; nor could he lay any snare to entangle and destroy man, but what man had wisdom enough, had he improved his faculties as he ought, to have avoided. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is evident that he was subject to fall; for that appears by the event. He had, indeed, no disposition to sin in his nature, for God could not create a person in such a state, since that would have rendered him the author of sin; yet he did not determine to prevent it. That man would have eventually been raised above all liability to fall, was a privilege, as will be hereafter considered, which man would have attained to, according to the tenor of the covenant he was under, had he performed its conditions; and so he would have been confirmed in holiness and happiness. But in this state it is certain he was not at first; because he fell. Of this, however, more shall be said under a following Answer.

m Gen. i. 26.

n Psal. viii. 6—8.

[NOTE 3 B. *The Image of God.*—The image of God, in which man was made, must, in order to be understood, be viewed in connexion with man's state after the fall. That it included a resemblance to God in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, seems to be fully implied in those passages of the New Testament which speak of the restoration of it in the believing and regenerated, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 14. Yet, in its primary or chief character, as distinguishing man at his creation, or as distinguishing him among the works of the Creator, it appears to have consisted in his moral intelligence, and in his possessing reasonable control over his own actions, and dominion over the inferior animals. Hence, as explanatory of the statement, 'God created man in his own image,' it is added, 'God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth,' Gen. i. 27, 28. Hence, too, the apostle Paul calls man 'the image and glory of God,' on the particular ground of his being the 'head of the woman,' or having control over her in the domestic constitution, 1 Cor. xi. 7.

God made man a moral and intelligent being, possessing freedom of will to control his own actions, and faculties to govern the inferior animals. But man lost neither his moral agency, his rationality, nor altogether his dominion over the brute creation, by the fall. What he lost was his holiness of nature, with whatever powers and enjoyments depended on a state of innocence. His holiness rendered him like God in moral character; but was not what constituted the image of God, as to intellectuality of nature, and government or control over objects and animals destitute of reason. As regarded these, man existed in the image of God as literally after the fall as before. His possessing that image was just what distinguished him from the irrational animals; and so late as the period after the flood, when permission was given to use the flesh of beasts for food, it was the special reason assigned by the divine lawgiver for distinguishing between man's life and the life of a brute. 'Whoso,' said God, 'sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man,' Gen. ix. 6. The apostle James affirms that all men, or men in general, possess the divine image. 'With the tongue,' he says, 'bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude,' or in the image, 'of God,' James iii. 9.

How highly does men's possessing the divine image enhance the quality of their actions, and the greatness of their responsibility to the King of heaven! Much is expected from our possessing reason; much from our possessing conscience; much from our possessing access to the light of revelation: how very much, then, from our being 'made after the image of God,' from our resembling the Deity in intellectuality of nature, from our enjoying a controlling power over what is animal, from our wielding influence over the welfare of all connected with us, and dominion over the interests of the lower animals! He who sins against God, sins against himself, for he bears God's image; and he who abuses his reason, or his intellectual influence, abuses the similitude of the character of his Creator.—ED.]

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## PROVIDENCE.

QUESTION XVIII. *What are God's works of providence?*

ANSWER. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

### *The Meaning of Providence.*

In discussing this answer, we must consider what we are to understand by providence in general. It supposes a creature brought into being; and consists in God's doing everything which is necessary for the continuance of that being, and in his ordering and overruling second causes to produce their separate effects, under the direction of his infinite wisdom and the influence of his almighty power. It is owing to providence that all things do not sink again into nothing, or that everything has what it wants to render it fit to answer the end designed in its creation. Pursuant to this general description of providence, it may be considered as consisting of two branches; first, God's upholding or preserving all creatures, and enabling them to act by his divine concurrence or influence; and, secondly, his governing or ordering them and all their actions for his own glory.

### *Upholding Providence.*

God upholds all things. This he is expressly said to do 'by the word of his power.' As God alone is independent and self-sufficient, the idea of a creature implies dependence; and that which depended on God for its being, must depend on him for the continuance of that being. If any creature in this lower world could preserve itself, surely man could do so, who is the most excellent of earthly creatures. But it is certain that man cannot preserve himself; for, if he could, he would not be subject to those decays of nature, or those daily infirmities, to which all are liable. He would also, doubtless, preserve himself from dying; for that is agreeable to the dictates of nature, which would, were it possible for him to do it, prevent itself from being dissolved. If man could preserve himself in being, moreover, he might, and doubtless would, by his own skill, maintain himself in a prosperous condition in this world, and always lead a happy life; for this is what nature cannot but desire. The fact, however, that all are liable to the afflictions and miseries of the present state, plainly argues that these are unavoidable, and, consequently, that there is a providence which maintains men and all other creatures in that state in which they are.

In considering the upholding providence of God, we must observe that it is either immediate or mediate. The former consists in his exerting that power by which we live, move, and act, and is sometimes called the divine manutenance. This cannot be exerted by a finite medium, any more than that power which brought all things into being. But besides this, God is said, according to the fixed laws of nature, to preserve his creatures by the instrumentality of second causes. Thus life is maintained by the air in which we breathe, and the food by which we are nourished. Everything, also, which tends to our comfort in life, is communicated to us by second causes, under the influence and direction of providence; to which



it is as much to be ascribed, as though it were brought about without means. Accordingly, Jacob considers God as giving him 'bread to eat, and raiment to put on,'<sup>g</sup> whatever diligence or industry was used by him to attain them. God is elsewhere said 'to give food to all flesh.'<sup>h</sup> And concerning brute creatures it is said, 'These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season; that thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.'<sup>i</sup>

### *Governing Providence.*

God governs all things by his providence, so that nothing happens by chance to him. This appears from those admirable displays of wisdom which come under our daily observation in the government of the world. Many things are ordered to subserve such ends as are attained by creatures without their own knowledge. The sun, for example, and other heavenly bodies, which are a common blessing to this lower world, the rain, the air, vapours, minerals, beasts, vegetables, and all other creatures below men, answer their respective ends, without their own design, and not by the will or management of any intelligent creature. They must, therefore, be under the direction of providence.

That there is a providence which governs the world, is so obvious a truth, that it has been denied by none but the most stupid part of mankind, who have wholly abandoned themselves to sensuality and libertinism, and hardly owned that there is a God, or such things as moral good and evil. These scarcely deserve the name of men.<sup>k</sup> All others have owned a providence, as what is the necessary consequence of the belief of a God. The doctrine of providence, therefore, is founded in the very nature of man; so that the heathen, who have had no other light than that affords, have expressed their belief of it, and have compared the Divine Being to a pilot who sits at the helm and steers the ship, or to one who guides the chariot where he pleases, or to a general who marshals and gives directions to the soldiers under his command, or to a king who sits on the throne and gives laws to all his subjects. Accordingly, the apostle Paul, when arguing with the Athenians from principles which they maintained, takes it for granted as what would not be contested by them, that there is a providence, when he says, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.'<sup>l</sup> Indeed, this truth appears to have been universally believed in the world, by men of all religions, whether true or false. As it is the foundation of all true worship, so that worship which was performed by the heathen, as derived partly from the light of nature and partly from tradition, and those prayers which were directed to God, and those altars which were erected for his service, all argue their belief, not only of a God, but of a providence. This doctrine, therefore, is agreeable to the light of nature, as well as plainly evinced from scripture.

<sup>g</sup> Gen. xxviii. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Psal. cxxxvi. 25.

<sup>i</sup> Psal. civ. 27, 28.

<sup>k</sup> It was denied, indeed, by the Epicureans, who were detested by the better sort of heathen, and reckoned the libertines of the respective ages in which they lived. Though they may occasionally speak of a God, yet they were deemed no better than atheists. Diogenes Laertius [Vid. in Vit. Epicuri, lib. x.] in the close of the life of Epicurus, gives a brief account of that philosopher's sentiments about religion, which he lays down in several short aphorisms. The first of these begins with this memorable passage, *Το μακαριον και εφελγον ουτι αυτο πραγματα ιχην ουτι αλλη παρ'ιχην* 'Quod beatum et immortale est neque ipsum negotia habet neque alii prebet;' which expression some of the wiser heathen have taken just offence at. Accordingly, Cicero, [Vid. ejusd. lib. i. de Nat. Deor.,] referring to this passage, says, that whatever veneration Epicurus pretended to have for the gods, he was no better than an Atheist, and brought a god into his philosophy, that he might not fall under the displeasure of the senate at Athens. He says, 'Novi ego Epicureos omnia Sigilla venerantes; quamquam video nonnullis videri Epicurum, ne in offensionem Atheniensium caderet, verbis reliquisse Deos, re sustulisse.' Lactantius observes the same thing concerning him, and describes him as a deceiver and a hypocrite, 'Hic vero si aliud sensit et aliud locutus est quid aliud appellandus est quam deceptor, bilinguis, malus, et propterea stultus?' [Vid. Lactant. de Ira Dei, cap. 4.] As for the poets, it was only the most vain among them, those who gave countenance to immorality, and endeavoured to debauch the age in which they lived, who denied the doctrine of providence. In our age, the denial of it seems to be one of the first principles of Deism.

<sup>l</sup> Acts xvii. 28.

*Particular Providence.*

The providence of God extends itself to all the actions of creatures. That this may appear, let it be considered that there are innumerable effects produced by what we call second causes. This is allowed by all. Moreover, every second cause implies, that there is a first cause, which guides and directs it. Now, no creature is the first cause of any action; for that is peculiar to God. It follows, therefore, that all creatures act under his influence, that is, by his providence. If it is 'in God,' not only that 'we live,' but 'move,' and act, there is no motion or action in the world, whether in things with or without life, but is under the influence of providence. We shall proceed, therefore, to consider the providence of God, as conversant about all things, the least as well as the greatest, and about things which are agreeable or contrary to the laws of nature, and particularly how it is conversant about the actions of intelligent creatures, such as angels and men.

The greatest things are not above, nor the least and most inconsiderable below, the care and influence of providence; and, consequently, it must extend itself to all things. The most excellent of finite beings are but creatures; and, as such, are dependent upon God, as much as the least. Accordingly, it is said, 'He doth according to his will, in the army of heaven,' as well as 'among the inhabitants of the earth.'<sup>m</sup> Sometimes we read of the providence of God, as conversant about the most glorious parts of the frame of nature. It is by his influence that the sun appears to perform its regular motions; he hath fixed it in the heavens, as in a tabernacle appointed for it. Those creatures also which are most formidable to men, as the leviathan, which is represented as the fiercest of all creatures which abide in the sea, and the lion, which is the fiercest of all the beasts of the forest, are described as subject to his providence, and as receiving their provisions from it.<sup>n</sup> Even the inconsiderable 'sparrow doth not fall to the ground without' it;<sup>o</sup> and the very 'hairs of our head are all numbered.' These are proverbial expressions to denote the particular concern of providence, as conversant about the most minute actions of life.

Again, the providence of God is conversant about those things which come to pass, either agreeably or contrary to the fixed laws of nature, the whole frame of which is held together by him. The successive returns of 'seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night,' are all ordered by him.<sup>p</sup> The elements and meteors are subject to his appointment. 'Fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy wind, fulfil his word.'<sup>q</sup> 'He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure; when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.'<sup>r</sup>

As to effects which are above or contrary to the course of nature, these also are subject to and ordered by his providence. It was contrary to the course of nature for the ravens, which are birds of prey, to bring provisions to mankind, yet these were ordered to bring a supply of food to the prophet Elijah.<sup>s</sup> The lions, which knew no difference between Daniel and his persecutors, and were naturally inclined to devour the one as well as the other, were obliged to make a distinction between them, and not to hurt the one, but immediately to devour the other.<sup>t</sup> A whale was provided, by providence, to receive and bring the prophet Jonah to land, when cast into the sea.<sup>u</sup> So the fire had no power over Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when thrown into it, but immediately consumed those who were ordered to cast them in.<sup>x</sup>

Further, providence is conversant about intelligent creatures, more particularly man, the most excellent creature in this lower world. He is, as it were, the peculiar care and darling of providence. It has rendered him capable of enjoying the blessings of both worlds, fitted him to glorify God actively as well as objectively,

<sup>m</sup> Dan. iv. 35.

<sup>q</sup> Psal. cxlviii. 8.

<sup>u</sup> Jonah i. 17.

<sup>n</sup> Job xli. Psal. civ. 21.

<sup>r</sup> Job xxviii. 24—26.

<sup>x</sup> Dan. iii. 22, 27.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. x. 29, 30.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. viii. 22.

<sup>t</sup> Dan. vi. 22, 24.



and governs him in a way suited to his nature, and as one who is designed for greater things than other creatures below him are capable of. Here we shall consider the providence of God, as ordering the state and condition of men in this world; and then speak more particularly of it, as conversant about the moral actions of men, considered as good or bad.

Providence, as conversant about the state and condition of man in this life, particularly respects both his natural and his religious interests. There is a peculiar care of providence extended towards us, in our birth and infancy. The psalmist acknowledges this, when he says, 'Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts; I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.'<sup>y</sup> Providence has provided the breast, and the most proper food contained in it, for the nourishment of the infant, at its coming into the world; and it has put those tender bowels into the parents, to whose immediate care it is committed, in consequence of which, without any arguments or persuasive motives besides what nature suggests, they cannot, unless divested of all humanity, and becoming worse than brutes, neglect and expose it to harm. Accordingly, the prophet says, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?'<sup>z</sup> Bo the parents never so poor, there is something in nature which inclines them rather to suffer themselves, than that the helpless infant should be exposed to suffer through their neglect. This is a peculiar instance of the care of providence. We may add, that the time and place in which we were born or live, the circumstances of our parents as to what concerns the world, especially if they are such as are religious themselves, and earnestly desire that their children may become so, and endeavour to promote their spiritual as well as their temporal welfare, are all instances of the care of providence.—Again, providence has respect to man in his childhood and advancing years. This discovers itself in furnishing us with natural capacities to receive instruction, which are daily improved as we grow in years. And though every one has not a degree of parts fitting him for some station in life which others are qualified for, yet most are endowed with that degree which may fit them for the station of life in which they are placed, so that they may glorify God some way or other in their generation.—Further, the care of providence respects various other ages and conditions of life. It is this which fixes the bounds of our habitation, determines and overrules the advantages or disadvantages of conversation, the secular callings or employments in which we are engaged, together with their issue and success. Health and sickness also, riches and poverty, the favour or the frowns of men, the term of life, whether long or short, are all under the direction of providence. 'One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.'<sup>a</sup> Likewise, as to what respects the injurious treatment we meet with from men, providence is so far concerned, that it sometimes permits it for the trial of our graces. At other times it averts the evil designed against us, by softening the tempers and allaying the resentments of our enemies,—as in the instance of Laban's and Esau's behaviour towards Jacob; or it finds some way to deliver us from the evil intended against us.—But the providence of God respects, more especially, the spiritual concerns of his people. There are some footsteps of it which have a more immediate subserviency to their conversion, particularly their being placed under the means of grace, either bringing the gospel to them, or ordering their abode where it is preached, and placing it before them in a way most adapted to awaken, instruct, convert, or reprove. Providence is very remarkable, also, in casting our lot where we may contract friendship and intimacy with those whose conversation and example may be made of use to us for our conviction, imitation, and conversion. Let me add, that sometimes there is a peculiar hand of providence, in sending afflictions, which are sanctified, and rendered means of grace, and have a tendency to awaken men out of their carnal security. This is one way whereby God speaks to man, to 'withdraw him from his

purpose, and hide pride from him.<sup>b</sup> Sometimes God makes his exemplary judgments, which are abroad in the world, effectual to warn others to flee from the wrath to come. As for the preaching of the gospel, there is sometimes a peculiar hand of providence in giving a suitable word. In this case, God often overrules the thoughts and studies of his ministers; so that they are, as it were, directed without their own forethought relating to this event, to insist on a subject which God designs to make instrumental for the conversion of souls. He sets this home on the consciences of men, keeps it fixed on the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, and enables them to improve it to his glory in the conduct of their lives.

We shall now consider the providence of God, as conversant about the actions of men. If other creatures are dependent on him, in acting as well as existing, certainly man must not be exempted from this dependence. There are several scriptures which speak of intelligent creatures, as under the influence of providence. Thus it is said, 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.'<sup>c</sup> And elsewhere the prophet says, 'O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps';<sup>d</sup> that is, he cannot manage himself in the conduct of life, either as an intelligent creature or as a believer, without supposing the natural or spiritual influence of divine providence. Now, these actions are considered as moral, and so are agreeable or contrary to the divine law. In these different respects they are either good or bad. The providence of God, then, is conversant about the good actions of men. Nor is it so only by upholding the powers and faculties of the soul in acting, or by giving a law which is the rule of conduct. Nor is it conversant about good actions only in an objective way, or by moral suasion, as affording rational arguments or inducements; but it is so, as implanting and exciting that principle by which we act, especially as it respects the work of grace in the souls of men. This is what we call the gracious dispensation of providence, exercised towards men, not merely as intelligent creatures, but as believers. This, however, we shall not insist on at present, as we shall be led to discuss it under some following Answers, which more particularly set forth the grace of God as displayed in the gospel. We now consider the actions of men in a more general view, and we call them good only as they contain a less degree of conformity to the divine law. But we refer the consideration of the goodness of actions, as under the influence of special grace, to its proper place. All that we shall observe at present is, that every thing good in the actions of intelligent creatures is under the direction and influence of providence. This assertion does not carry even the least appearance of a reflection on the divine perfections, while we suppose God to be the Governor of intelligent creatures, acting as such. I presume, therefore, it will not be much contested by any who allow a providence in general.

But the providence of God is conversant also about evil actions. This is a subject which involves a very great difficulty. We must use the utmost caution, lest we advance anything which may argue God to be the author of sin; and yet we are not to suppose that the providence of God is to be wholly excluded from those actions which are sinful. There is certainly some meaning in such scriptures as these: God says concerning Pharaoh, 'I will harden his heart.'<sup>e</sup> 'Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for the Lord thy God hardened his heart, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand.'<sup>f</sup> Concerning Shimei it is said, 'The Lord said unto him, Curse David.'<sup>g</sup> Concerning Joseph's brethren, who sold him into Egypt, it is said, 'It was not you that sent me hither, but God.'<sup>h</sup> Concerning the false prophets who deceived Ahab, it is said, 'The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets.'<sup>i</sup> These and similar scriptures are not to be expunged from the Bible, but are to be explained in a way consistent with the divine perfections. Nothing can be inferred from them, if this be not, that the providence of God is in some way conversant about those actions which are sinful. Still it is not in such a way as argues him to be either the author or the approver of sin. Accordingly, I would choose to say, that the pro-

b Job xxxiii. 14, 17, 19.  
f Deut. ii. 30.

c Prov. xxi. 1.  
g 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

d Jer. x. 23.  
h Gen. xlv. 8.

e Exod. iv. 21.  
i 1 Kings xxii. 23.



vidence of God is conversant about those actions to which sin is annexed, rather than that it is conversant about sin itself, or about the obliquity or sinfulness of the actions. That we may understand this matter, we must distinguish between what is natural, and what is sinful in an action. The former is from God; the latter is from ourselves. This is often illustrated by similitudes. The motion of a bowl, for example, is from the hand which throws it; but the irregularity of the motion is from the bias which turns it aside. The motion of a horse is excited by the whip and spur of the rider; but if it goes lame, the defect or halting which it has in its motion, proceeds from an inward indisposition in the horse, and not from the rider. The sun draws forth vapours from the earth by that heat which has a tendency to exhale them; but the stench which attends what is exhaled from a dunghill, is not from the sun, but from the nature of the substance whence it is drawn. So the providence of God enables sinners to act in a natural way; but the sinfulness, irregularity, or moral defects which attend their actions, is from the corruption of their own nature. The man who blasphemeth, for example, could not think or utter his blasphemy without the concurrence of the common providence of God, which enables him to perform the natural actions of thinking and speaking; but that the thoughts or tongue should be set against God or goodness, is from the depravity of his own nature. Again, to kill or take away the life of a man is, in some respects, a natural action, as it cannot be done without thought or strength to execute what we design. These are the gifts of providence; and, as respects these, God concurs in the action. Joab could not have killed Abner or Amasa, if he had not had a natural power to use the instrument with which he acted. This power was from God; but the malice which prompted him to abuse the gifts of providence, his hypocritical subtilty, and his dissimulation or disguise of friendship which gave him an opportunity to execute his bloody design, were from the wickedness of his own heart. The providence of God may thus be conversant about that which is natural in a sinful action, without reflecting dishonour on him, as the author of sin. But we must add some considerations as to the manner in which it is conversant about sinful actions, in order that we may better understand those scriptures which we have just quoted; and, I hope, nothing which shall be stated will be accounted derogatory to the divine glory.

The providence of God, then, may be conversant, in an objective way, about those actions to which sin is annexed, without his being the author or approver of it. Sin would not be committed, in many instances, if there were not some objects presented which give occasion to it. The object which presents itself may be from God, when the sin which is occasioned thereby is from the corruption of our nature. Thus Joseph's brethren would not have thought of killing him, or of selling him into Egypt, at least when they did, if he had not obeyed his father's command, in going to deliver his message, and see how it fared with them. Providence ordered his going to inquire respecting their welfare; and hereby the object was presented to them, which their own corrupt nature inclined them to abuse; so that, as soon as they saw him, they entered into a conspiracy against him. In so far as the providence of God was objectively conversant about this action, God is said to have sent Joseph into Egypt; though every circumstance in it which was vile and sinful, was from themselves. Again, in the instance before-mentioned, of Shimei's cursing David, providence was conversant about the action, in so far as it ordered that David should come by at that time when Shimei was there, without his doing which Shimei would not have cursed him. When it is said, in the scripture referred to, that 'The Lord said to Shimei, curse David,' the meaning is, 'The Lord hath brought me into so low a condition, that the vilest persons, who, before this time, were afraid to open their mouths against me, now take occasion to give vent to their malicious reproaches, as Shimei did.' The providence of God was conversant about this action, in an objective way. Now, whatever it is so conversant about, God, according to the scripture-mode of speaking, is said to do. When, for example, the manslayer killed one, through inadvertency, who was presented as an object to him, God is said to 'deliver him into his hand.'<sup>k</sup> Yet

in all sinful actions, God's presenting the object, does not render him the author of the sin; for this is to be ascribed to the corruption of nature which took occasion from the sight of the object to exert itself. Accordingly, such an object might have been presented, and the sinful action not have ensued. Thus 'the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment,' were no temptation to other Israelites, who, as well as Achan, saw them among the spoils of Jericho; though they were so to him, through the covetousness of his own temper, and the corruption of his nature, which internally moved him to his sinful action. Again, objects are not presented by providence with a design to ensnare or draw persons to sin, though God knows that occasion will be taken from it to commit sin. There are other ends of their being presented; which may be illustrated by a particular instance. God knows, that if the gospel be preached, some will take occasion to reproach it. Yet he orders that it shall be preached, not that men may take occasion to reproach it, but that those whom he has ordained to eternal life may be converted by it. So our Saviour appeared publicly at the feast of the passover, though he knew that the Jews would put him to death; yet, the end of his going to Jerusalem was not that he might draw forth their corruption, but that he might finish the work which he came into the world to do. He was, at that time, engaged in his Father's work; but they performed that which they were prompted to do, by Satan and their own wicked hearts.

Again, when the providence of God is said to be conversant about sin, it is in suffering or permitting it, not in suggesting it or tempting to it. No one, as the apostle James remarks, ought to say, 'when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God; for God cannot tempt any man;' but, when he is tempted, 'he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.'<sup>l</sup> So far as the providence of God denies restraining grace, whence corrupt nature takes occasion to break forth, it is conversant about sin occasionally, not effectively. When the banks or flood-gates which keep waters within due bounds, are broken down by their owner, who does not think fit to repair them, the waters will, according to the course of nature, overflow the country. Or, if the hedge or enclosure which secures the standing corn be taken away, the beasts, by a propensity of nature, will tread it down, and devour it. So if that which would have a tendency to restrain or prevent sin be taken away, it will be committed; and the providence of God may do this, either in a way of sovereignty, or as a punishment for former sins committed, without being charged as the author of sin. It is not the same, in this case, as when men do not prevent sin in others, when it is in their power to do so; for they are under an obligation to prevent it whenever they can. But God is under no obligation to extend his restraining grace to sinful men; and sometimes he suffers that wrath which he will not restrain, to break forth, as having a design, some way or other, to glorify himself by it. Accordingly, the psalmist says 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.'<sup>m</sup>

Further, the providence of God may be said to be concerned about sin, in overruling it for his own glory, and his people's good. In the former instances, the design or agency of providence discovers itself, before the sin was committed; but, in this, it discovers itself afterwards. It is a wonderful display of his wisdom; for it makes provision that, while the sinner obstinately resolves to rebel against him, his conduct shall tend not to lessen, but to illustrate some of his perfections. Thus he overruled the wicked action of Joseph's brethren, in their selling him into Egypt, to preserve their lives, in the time of famine. Accordingly Joseph says, 'God did send me before you to preserve life.'<sup>n</sup> And the vilest action that ever was committed in the world, namely, the crucifying of the Lord of glory, was overruled for saving his people from their sins. Sometimes also we read of God's punishing the obstinacy and rebellion of men, by giving courage and success to their enemies against them. Thus Nebuchadnezzar's success in arms against the Jews, was ordered by the providence of God, to punish their idolatry; first, by carrying the greatest part of them captive, and then, when pursuing those who, contrary to God's order, fled into Egypt, by destroying them or carrying them captive like-



wise. In doing this, Nebuchadnezzar is called 'God's servant;'<sup>o</sup> not as though he had in it any religious regard to the honour and command of God. His design was only to enlarge his dominions, by depriving others of their natural rights; yet God overruled this, for setting forth the glory of his vindictive justice against a sinful people. Cyrus, on the other hand, was raised up to be Israel's deliverer from captivity. His success in war, which God designed should be subservient to his being so, is styled, his 'girding him;'<sup>p</sup> and God promises, that he would 'loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates.' All this was done with a design that Cyrus should give liberty to God's people; though Cyrus had no more religion, or real regard to the interest of God in the world, than other kings, who design little else but the satisfying of their own ambition. It is expressly said of him, 'Thou hast not known me.' God did not approve of that corruption which might give the first occasion to the war, or that injustice which might appear in it; yet he overruled it to answer the ends of his own glory. Moreover, in the overruling providence of God, there are some things which seem to have a more direct tendency to bring about the ends designed, agreeably to the nature of those second causes which he makes use of, whereby he gives us occasion to expect the event which follows. On the other hand, he sometimes brings about some great and valuable ends by those means, which, at first view, have no apparent tendency to produce them, but which are overruled without or contrary to the design of second causes. In these cases, the admirable wisdom of providence discovers itself. Thus those things which to all appearance seem to threaten our ruin, are ordered to subserve our future happiness, though such a result is at present altogether unexpected. When there was such a dark gloom cast on the world, by the entrance of sin, who would have thought that this should be overruled by providence, to give occasion to the display of those divine perfections which are glorified in the work of our redemption? I do not, indeed, relish the expression of an ancient writer, who says, "Happy sin! which gave occasion to man's salvation." But I would say, How admirable was the providence of God, which overruled the vilest action to answer so great an end, and brought so much good out of that which, in itself, was so great an evil!

We might here give some particular instances of the dispensations of providence by which God brings good out of evil; and consider those lengths which he hath suffered some men to run in sin, whom he designed, notwithstanding, effectually to call and save. Of this the apostle Paul was a very remarkable instance. He considers divine providence in the events of his history, as an expedient whereby God designed to 'show forth all long-suffering, as a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on Christ to life eternal,' and as an encouragement to men, to conclude that 'Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners.'<sup>q</sup> The injurious treatment which God's people have met with from their enemies, has sometimes been overruled for their good. Thus Ishmael's 'mocking,' or, as the apostle calls it, 'persecuting' Isaac, and, as is more than probable, reproaching not only him but the religion which he professed, was overruled, by providence, for Isaac's good, when Ishmael was separated from him. This set him out of danger of being led aside by his bad example, as well as delivered him from that uneasiness which his opposition to him would have occasioned; and it was most agreeable to his future circumstances, whom God designed, not only to be the heir of the family, but the propagator of religion in it. Again, Pharaoh's cruelty, and the methods used to prevent the increasing of the children of Israel in Egypt, were overruled by the providence of God; so that the Israelites appeared afterwards to be, in a peculiar manner, the objects of providential care. It is particularly remarked, in scripture, as an instance of the kind hand of providence towards them, that 'the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.'<sup>r</sup> Again, the inhuman and barbarous cruelty of Simeon and Levi, in slaying the Shechemites,<sup>s</sup> brought on them a curse; and accordingly their father pronounced it, and tells them, that God would divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in

<sup>o</sup> Jer. xliii. 10.<sup>p</sup> Isa. xlv. 1, 5.<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.<sup>r</sup> Exod. i. 12.<sup>s</sup> Gen. xxxiv. 25.

Israel.<sup>t</sup> This had its particular accomplishment in Levi's having no distinct inheritance, except those cities which were appointed out of every tribe. But this dividing and scattering of the Levites throughout the whole country, was overruled by the providence of God, for the good of his people in general; for thereby this tribe, which God had ordained 'to teach Jacob his judgments and Israel his law,'<sup>u</sup> was, through the nearness of their habitation, conveniently situated among them to answer that end. We might farther observe, that Saul's unreasonable jealousy and fury in persecuting David, were overruled by providence for his good. In his exile, he had a greater degree of communion with God than at other times, and, as is more than probable, was inspired to pen the greater number of his Psalms, and was, as it were, trained for the crown in the school of affliction, and so more fitted to govern Israel, when God designed to put it on his head. Let me add, that God's suffering the persecuting rage of the Jews to vent itself against the apostles, when the gospel was first preached by them, was overruled by providence for their scattering, and this for the farther spread of the gospel wherever they went. The apostle Paul observes, that 'his bonds in Christ were not only manifest in all the palace, and in all other places,' but were made conducive to 'the furtherance of the gospel.'<sup>x</sup> As for that contention which occurred, at one time, between him and Barnabas, in which each of them showed that they were but men, subject to like passions and infirmities with others, it seems to have been occasioned by a small and inconsiderable circumstance, and yet rose to such a height, that 'they departed one from the other.'<sup>y</sup> Each seemed to be overmuch tenacious of his own humour. But providence suffered the corruption of these excellent men to discover itself, and their separation to ensue, that, by this means, their ministry might be rendered more extensive, and double service be done to the interest of Christ in different parts of the world. We might descend to instances of later date, and consider how God suffered the church of Rome to arrive at the greatest pitch of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and wholly to forsake the faith of the gospel, so as to establish the doctrine of merit, and human satisfactions; how he suffered its leaders to be so profanely absurd, as to expose pardons and indulgences to public sale; and how his providence overruled all for bringing about the glorious Reformation in Germany. If it be added, that pride, lust, and covetousness, paved the way for it here in England, the fact is no blemish to the Reformation, as the Papists pretend, but a display of the overruling providence of God which brought it about by this means.

I might enlarge on this subject, in considering the providence of God as bringing about wonderful and unexpected changes in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations, remarkably bringing down some who made the greatest figure in the world, and putting a glory on others raised up out of their ruins. We might show likewise how all political affairs have been rendered subservient to answer the ends of the divine glory, with respect to the church in the world, and the deliverances which God has in various ages wrought for it, when it was, to all appearance, on the brink of ruin. Of this we have many instances not only in scripture, but in the history of almost every age of the world. We might also consider the methods which God has often taken to bring about his people's deliverance, when, to an eye of reason, it seemed almost impossible; and how he has either dispirited their enemies, or removed them out of the way, or found them some other work to do for their own safety and defence. 'The stout-hearted are spoiled; they have slept their sleep; and none of the men of might have found their hands.'<sup>z</sup> When Saul was pursuing David, in the wilderness of Maon, and had compassed him and his men round about to take them, there came a messenger to him, saying, 'Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land.'<sup>a</sup> Sometimes also he softens their spirits, by a secret and immediate touch of providence, working a change in their natural temper and disposition. Thus he provided for Jacob's escape, from that death which was designed by his brother Esau. And if God intends that his people shall fall by the hand of their persecutors, he gives them

<sup>t</sup> Gen. xlix. 7.<sup>u</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 10.<sup>x</sup> Phil. i. 12, 13.<sup>y</sup> Acts xv. 36—40.<sup>z</sup> Psal. lxxvi. 5.<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27.



courage and resolution, together with the exercise of all those graces which are necessary to support them under and carry them through the difficulties which they have to undergo. But these considerations are so largely insisted on by those who have written professedly on the doctrine of providence,<sup>b</sup> that more needs not to be said on this subject. I shall therefore only consider an objection or two, generally brought against it by those who pretend to acknowledge that there is a God, but deny his providence.

It is objected against the concern of the providence of God, with respect to the smallest things in this world, that they are unworthy of his notice, below his care, and therefore not the objects of his providence. But if it was not unbecoming his power to bring the smallest things into being, or to preserve them from sinking into nothing, they cannot be excluded from being the objects of his providence. If we consider the whole frame of nature, it cannot be denied, that some things have a tendency to answer the general design of providence, in a more eminent degree than others, and that there are many things, the use of which cannot be particularly discerned by us, otherwise than as they constitute a small part of the frame of nature. But to say that any part of that frame is altogether useless, or excluded from being the object of providence, is a reflection on God, as the God of nature. We must hence conclude, that all things are, some way or other, subject to his providence; and that this is so far from being a dishonour to him, that it redounds to his glory.

It is further objected, by those who are disposed to cavil at and find fault with the divine dispensations, that they are not just and equal, because we often see the righteous afflicted, and the wicked prosperous in the world. To say this is to reproach, if not wholly to deny, the doctrine of providence. Not only wicked men say it, but believers themselves have sometimes been under a temptation, through the prevalency of corrupt nature, to bring their objections against the equity of providence. Thus the psalmist says, 'But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.'<sup>c</sup> 'These are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.' As for himself, he says, 'Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.'<sup>d</sup> The prophet Jeremiah, also, when pleading with God concerning his judgments, though he owns, in general, that God was 'righteous,' yet says, 'Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.'<sup>e</sup> He could hardly reconcile the general idea which he had of God's justice, with the seeming inequality of the dispensations of his providence. The prophet Habakkuk, likewise, though he owns that God was 'of purer eyes than to behold evil,' and that 'he cannot look upon iniquity,' yet seems to complain, in the following words, 'Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?'<sup>f</sup> And Job seems to speak very unbecomingly, when he says, 'Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress? that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands? and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?'<sup>g</sup> So that, as the wicked boldly deny a providence, or at least reproach it, others, of a far better character, have, through the prevalency of their unbelief, seemed to detract from its glory.

Now we may reply in general, in the apostle's words, 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'<sup>h</sup> Is there no deference to be paid to his sovereignty, who has a right to do what he will with his own? Is his justice to be impeached and tried at our bar, or his wisdom to be measured by our short-sighted discerning of things, who cannot see the end from the beginning of his dispensations?

<sup>b</sup> See Charnock, Flavell, Dr. Collings on Providence.  
<sup>d</sup> Ver. 12—14.

<sup>e</sup> Jer. xii. 1, 2.

<sup>f</sup> Hab. i. 13.

<sup>g</sup> Job x. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. lxxiii. 2—5.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. ix. 20.

It is true, good men have been sometimes tempted to question the equity of the distributions of providence, as in the instances just mentioned. We might suppose, indeed, that the prophets Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Job, rather speak the sense of the world, than their own sentiments of things, and desire that God would clear up some dark providences in order that wicked men might not bring their objections against them. It may be doubted, however, whether this be the sense of those scriptures or not. As for the psalmist, it is plain, that, in the scripture quoted, he expresses the weakness of his own faith, which was sometimes almost overset; yet, at other times, God condescends to resolve his doubts, and bring him into a better frame, as appears by some following verses.—But, that we may give a more particular reply, let it be considered that the unequal distribution of things is so far from being a disparagement to any government, that it eminently sets forth its beauty, wisdom, and excellency, and is, in some respects, necessary. As it is not fit that every subject should be advanced to the same honour, or that the favour of a prince should be dispensed alike to all; so it sets forth the beauty of providence, as God is the Governor of the world, that some should appear to be more eminently the objects of his favour than others.—Again, the wicked, whose condition is supposed, by those who bring this objection, to be more happy than that of the righteous, will not appear, if things were duly weighed, to be so happy as they are pretended to be. By the evils to which they are exposed at present, some of which are the immediate result and consequence of sin, they are, as it were, tortured and distracted with contrary lusts and passions, which militate against the dictates of human nature, and render the pleasures of sin little desirable in themselves. Those tormenting reflections also which they sometimes have after the commission of sin, are altogether inconsistent with peace or happiness, much more if we consider the end of sin, as leading to everlasting destruction. Accordingly, it is said, ‘Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.’<sup>i</sup> The good man, therefore, would not change conditions with the wicked, how destitute soever he may be of those riches, honours, or sensual pleasures which the other reckons his portion. ‘A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.’<sup>k</sup>—As for the good man, who is supposed to be in an afflicted condition in this life, we are not to conclude that he is, in all respects, unhappy; but we are to judge of his state by its end. He who looks upon Lazarus, as full of sores and destitute of many of the conveniencies of life, may reckon him to have been unhappy here, when compared with the condition of the rich man, who is represented in the parable as ‘clothed with purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day.’ But if we consider him, when leaving the world, as ‘carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom,’ while the other was plunged into an abyss of misery, no one will see reason to charge the providence of God with any neglect of him, or to regard him as really miserable because of his condition in the present life.—Moreover, if we consider the righteous in his most disadvantageous circumstances as to his outward condition, we must regard him as, notwithstanding these, an object of divine love, and made partaker of those graces and inward comforts which are more than a balance for all his outward troubles. We may say of him, as the apostle does of himself, that though he is ‘unknown,’ that is, obscure, and as it were disowned by the world, yet he is ‘well known,’ that is, approved and beloved of God. Does he live an afflicted and dying life? He has, notwithstanding, a better life, which is maintained by God. Is he chastened? He, notwithstanding, is not killed. Is he sorrowful? He, notwithstanding, always ‘rejoiceth.’ Is he poor? He, notwithstanding, ‘maketh many rich.’ Has he nothing, as to outward things? He, notwithstanding, ‘possesseth all things,’ as he is an heir of eternal life.<sup>l</sup>

i Prov. xiv. 13, 14.

k Psal. xxxvii. 16.

l 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.



## PROVIDENCE TOWARD ANGELS.

QUESTION XIX. *What is God's providence towards the angels?*

ANSWER. God, by his providence, permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness; employing them all at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice.

It was observed, in a foregoing Answer, that God created all the angels holy. But in this Answer some of them are described as fallen, while the rest retained their first integrity; and the providence of God is considered as conversant about this matter in different respects.

*Providence toward the Fallen Angels.*

It is said that 'God, by his providence, permitted some of the angels to fall.' This appears by the event; because there are some wicked and impure spirits, sunk down into the depths of misery, from that state in which they were created, as the consequence of their rebellion against God. And as it was only a part of the angels that fell, we may infer that the dispensation of providence towards the angels was different from that which mankind was subject to when first created; or that one of them was not constituted the head and representative of the rest, in whom they were all to stand or fall, but that the happiness or misery of every one of them was to be the result of his own personal conduct. As their persisting in obedience to God was necessary to their establishment in holiness and happiness, so the least instance of rebellion against him would bring inevitable ruin upon them. Now, that which is observed concerning a part of them, is, that they fell into sin and damnation. Accordingly, the apostle says, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.'<sup>m</sup> Their sin, or fall, was wilful; they commenced an open war against their Creator. Herein that enmity to God and goodness took its rise, which has ever since, in various instances, been expressed by them. Their sin appears to have been wilful, inasmuch as it was committed against the greatest degree of light, for all the angels are described as 'excelling in knowledge.' That subtilty also, which discovers itself in the fallen angels, and which is knowledge abused and depraved with sin, argues that their knowledge, before they fell, was very great, and that therefore their rebellion was aggravated in proportion. Moreover, they sinned without a tempter, especially those who first took up arms against God. Whether others, by their instigation, might not be induced to sin, we know not.<sup>n</sup> But this is certain, that the rebellion was begun without a tempter. There were no fallen creatures to present a temptation, nor any corruption in their natures, which internally drew them aside from God. Their sin, therefore, might well be styled wilful. The consequence was their irrecoverable ruin. This respects the event of their fall. God designed for ever to leave them in that sinful and miserable state, into which they hereby brought themselves. He might, indeed, have recovered them, as well as sinful man, had he pleased; but he has provided no mediator, no surety, to give satisfaction for them. The blessed Jesus is expressly said, not to have 'taken their nature upon him,'—language which intimates that their condition was irretrievable, and their misery to be eternal.

Now, it is farther observed, that the providence of God was conversant about their sin and fall, in the same sense in which, as has been before observed, it is conversant about sin in general. This is consistent with God's holiness, as well as his other perfections, namely, in permitting, limiting, and ordering their fall and all their other sins, to his own glory.

1. He permitted their fall. To permit, is not to prevent a sin; and to say that

<sup>m</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Some think, that those expressions in scripture, which speak of 'the devil and his angels' and 'the prince of devils,' import as much, but this we pretend not to determine.

God did not prevent their fall, is to assert a truth which none ever denied, or thought necessary to be proved.

2. The providence of God sets bounds and limits to their sin ; as it does to the waves of the sea, when he says, ' Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther.' How destructive to mankind would the malice of fallen angels be, were it not restrained ! What would not Satan attempt against us, had he an unlimited power ! We have a remarkable instance of this in the case of Job. Satan first accused him as a time-serving hypocrite, a mercenary professor, one that did not ' fear God for nought ; ' <sup>o</sup> and how desirous was he that providence would give him up to his will, and take away the hedge of its safe protection ! But God would not do this. Nevertheless, so far as Satan was suffered, he poured in a confluence of evils upon him, but could proceed no farther. First, he was suffered to plunder him of his substance, and take away his children, by a violent death, but was so restrained, that ' upon himself ' he was ' not to put forth his hand.' <sup>p</sup> Afterwards he was permitted to touch his person ; and then we read of his smiting him with ' sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.' <sup>q</sup> But yet he was not suffered to take away his life. After this, the devil's malice still growing stronger against him, he endeavours to weaken his faith, to drive him into despair, and to rob him of that inward peace which might have given some allay to his other troubles ; but he is not suffered to destroy his graces, or to hurry him into a total apostacy from God. What would not fallen angels attempt against mankind, were not their sin limited by the providence of God !

3. God's providence ordered or overruled the fall of angels, and all sins consequent upon it, to his own glory. Their power, indeed, though limited, is great ; as appears by the innumerable instances of those who have been, not only tempted, but overthrown and ruined by them. It may truly be said of them, that ' they have cast down many wounded ; yea, many strong men have been slain by them.' Nevertheless, God overrules their power for his own glory ; for he hence takes occasion to try his people's graces, to give them a humbling sense of the corruption of their nature, and of their inability to stand in the hour of temptation without his immediate assistance, and puts them upon imploring help from him with great importunity. The apostle Paul did this, <sup>r</sup> when ' the messenger of Satan ' was suffered ' to buffet him,' and God took occasion, at the same time, to display that ' grace which was sufficient for him,' and that ' strength which was made perfect in weakness,' and, in the end, to bruise Satan under his feet, and to make him more than a conqueror over him.

Having thus considered some of the angels, as sinning and falling, it might farther be inquired, whether these all fell at once. Here I cannot but take notice of a very absurd and groundless conjecture of some of the Fathers, and of others who, of late, have been too much inclined to adopt it, that though some of the angels sinned from the beginning, and these were the occasion of the sin of our first parents, as all allow, yet, after this, others who were appointed to minister to men were unfaithful in the discharge of their office, and became partners with them in sin. Accordingly they understand that scripture, in which it is said, ' The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair ; and they took them wives of all which they chose,' <sup>s</sup> as though it were meant of angels ; <sup>t</sup> whereas it designates

<sup>o</sup> Job i. 9.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 12.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. ii. 7.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.

<sup>s</sup> Gen. vi. 2.

<sup>t</sup> This was the opinion of most of the Fathers, in the three first centuries of the church, namely, Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Lactantius, Irenæus, Cyprian, and others. Some of them appear to have taken the hint of it from some MS. of the LXX translation, which rendered the words in Gen. vi. 2. instead of ' the sons of God,' ' the angels saw the daughters of men,' &c. this translation being used by them, instead of the Hebrew text, which they did not well understand. Others took it from a spurious and fabulous writing which they had in their hands, called ' Enoch,' or, ' the Prophecy of Enoch,' or rather, ' Liber, πνευματικός, de Egregoris,' a barbarous Greek word, used to signify angels, and taken from the character given them of watchers, in Daniel. Of this book, we have some fragments now remaining, in which there is such a ridiculous and fabulous account of this matter, as very much exceeds that in the apocryphal history of Tobit. It gives an account of a conspiracy among the angels relating to this matter, the manner of their entering into it, their names, the year of the world, and place in which this wickedness was committed, and other things which are unworthy of a grave historian ; and the reckoning of it among those writings which are supposed to have a divine sanction, is little other than pro-



only some of the posterity of Seth who, before the period of which it speaks, were professors of the true religion. There are, indeed, some of late, who have adopted this notion, and strain the sense of that text in Jude, in which it is said, that 'the angels which kept not their first estate, &c. even as Sodom and Gomorrah, giving themselves over to fornication, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.'<sup>u</sup> The meaning of that passage they suppose to be, that, even as the Sodomites were guilty of fornication, and were destroyed for it by fire from heaven, so some of the angels were sent down to hell for the same sin. But, it is plain that the apostle does not here compare the angels and the Sodomites, as guilty of the same kind of sin, but as being both condemned to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, and both set forth as warnings to presumptuous sinners. Nothing more needs be added under this Head. It is enough to say, that the opinion in question is contrary to the spirituality of the nature of angels. There are some ancient writers, indeed, who, to give countenance to it, have supposed that the angelic spirits were either united to some bodies, or that they assumed them for the purpose. But this conjecture is absurd, and without any countenance from scripture. Thus concerning the providence of God as exercised towards the angels that fell.

*Providence toward the Holy Angels.*

Providence is conversant also about the rest of the angels, who retain their integrity. Concerning these it is said, that 'God established them in holiness and happiness.' These two privileges are always connected together. It is not said, that they were brought into such a state, or, like man, recovered out of a fallen state; for they are considered as sinless or holy angels. Nor is it supposed that their holiness was increased; for to suppose this would be inconsistent with its having been perfect before. That privilege, which providence conferred on them, was the confirming or establishing of them in that state in which they were created. This privilege bears some resemblance to that which man would have enjoyed, had he retained his integrity; as he would not only have continued to be holy and happy so long as he remained innocent, but he would have been so confirmed in it, that his fall would have been prevented. Of this, more shall be said in its proper place. Now the angels had something like this; which we call the grace of confirmation.

Some have inquired whether this was the result of their yielding perfect obedience for a time, while remaining in a state of probation, pursuant to some covenant, not much unlike that which God made with innocent man. In other words, they inquire whether this privilege was the consequence of their fulfilling the condition of such a covenant. But this is to enter too far into things out of our reach; nor is it much for our edification to determine the question, though some have asserted without proving it. Others have supposed the angels were confirmed when first created, and that in their being so, there was among them an instance of discriminating grace, so that they who fell, were left to the mutability of their wills, while they who stood had the grace of confirmation.—I might here have been more particular, in considering what this privilege imports, and how it renders the fall of those who are confirmed impossible, and therefore is a very considerable addition to their happiness. But as we shall have occasion under a following Answer, to speak of the grace of confirmation which man was given to expect in the first covenant, and of the privileges which would have attended it had he stood, we shall add no more on that subject in this place, but proceed to prove that the angels are established and confirmed in holiness and happiness.

faneness and blasphemy. Some of the Fathers who refer to this book, pretend it to be no other than apocryphal; and, had they counted it otherwise, all would have reckoned it a burlesque upon scripture. Hence Origen, who, on other occasions, seems to pay too great a deference to it, when Celsus takes notice of it as containing a banter on the Christian religion, is obliged to reply to him, that that book was not in great reputation in the church, Vid. Orig. contra Celsum, lib. v. Jerome reckons it among the apocryphal writings, Vid. Hieronym. in Catal. Script. Eccles. cap. 4. Augustin calls it not only apocryphal, but, as it deserves, fabulous, Vid. ejusd. de Civ. Dei, lib. xv. ap. 23.

This may, in some measure, be argued, from their being called 'elect angels.'<sup>x</sup> If election, when applied to men, imports the purpose of God to confer everlasting blessedness on those who are its objects, and so implies not only that they shall be saved, but that their salvation shall be eternal; why may it not, when applied to angels, infer the eternity of their holiness and happiness, and consequently their being established in these? Again, this may be argued from their coming with Christ when he shall appear to judge the world, and from the joining of the saints and angels together in one assembly in heaven. If the happiness of the one be eternal, that of the other must be so likewise. It is also said expressly of the angels, that 'they always behold the face of God.' And when we read of the destruction of the church's enemies, the angels are represented as observers of God's righteous judgments; and then it is added, that the punishment inflicted on those who shall 'drink of the wine of the wrath of God,' shall be eternal, and that this eternal punishment will be 'in the presence of the holy angels.'<sup>y</sup> If, therefore, the duration of the holiness and happiness of the angels be equal to that of the misery of God's implacable enemies, it follows that, as both are said to be eternal, the angels are established in holiness and happiness.

### *The Ministry of Angels.*

It is farther observed, that God employs all the angels at his pleasure in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice. This leads us to speak concerning the ministry of angels, which is either extraordinary or ordinary. Most of the instances which we have of it, especially in the Old Testament, were performed in an extraordinary manner; and sometimes it was attended with their appearance in a human form, assumed for the purpose of their ministering. We may briefly consider the fact of the ministry of angels, and then inquire whether, though their ministry be not visible or attended with such circumstances as it formerly was, there are not some other instances in which the providence of God now employs them for the good of his church.—As to the former, we read that God has sometimes sent them to supply his servants with necessary food when destitute of it, and when there was no ordinary way for their procuring it. Thus an angel brought a cake and a cruse of water to Elijah when he was on his journey to Horeb, the mount of God.<sup>z</sup> And when Abraham's servant was travelling to Mesopotamia, to bring a wife thence for Isaac, Abraham tells him that 'God would send his angel before him,'<sup>a</sup> and so make his journey prosperous.—Again, the angels have sometimes been sent to defend God's people, and to assure them of safety when exposed to danger. Thus, when Jacob was returning from Laban to his own country, and was apprehensive of the danger to which he was exposed from the resentment of his brother Esau, it is said that 'the angels of God met him; and, when he saw them, he said, This is God's host.'<sup>b</sup> And when the prophet Elijah was encompassed about by the Syrian army, sent on purpose to take him, he was defended by an host of angels appearing under the emblem of horses and chariots of fire round about him.<sup>c</sup> Others, when persecuted, and, as it were, delivered over to death, have been preserved, as Daniel was when cast into the lions' den, by the ministry of angels.<sup>d</sup> Others have been released by them from their chains, and had their prison doors opened, as Peter and the rest of the apostles.<sup>e</sup>—Sometimes, also, angels have been employed to deliver messages, and to give the prophets an extraordinary intimation of future events, as the angel Gabriel did to Daniel.<sup>f</sup> An angel was sent to Zacharias to foretell the birth of his son, John the Baptist.<sup>g</sup>—Moreover, the angels of God have sometimes been employed to give a check to his enemies, when they have attempted anything against his church. Thus, the angel met Balaam in the way, when he was riding to seek enchantments against Israel; 'his way being perverse before God.'<sup>h</sup> Another angel was sent, as a minister of God's justice, to bring the pestilence on Israel for David's numbering the people;

x 1 Tim. v. 21.

a Gen. xxiv. 7.

d Dan. vi. 22.

f Dan. viii. 16.

y Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

b Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.

e Acts xii. 17. compared with chap. v. 19.

g Luke i. 13.

z 1 Kings xix. 5—8.

c 2 Kings vi. 15—17.

h Numb. xxii. 32.



and he appeared 'with his hand stretched out upon Jerusalem to destroy it,'<sup>l</sup> and afterwards withdrew his hand, when God told him, 'It is enough,' and that 'it repented him of the evil.'—We may add, that the angels shall be employed at last in gathering together the elect from the four winds, that they may appear before Christ's tribunal. These, and many other similar instances, are mentioned in scripture, to set forth the extraordinary ministry of angels.

There are also other instances, in which, though miracles have ceased, the angels are employed to perform some works in the hand of providence for God's people. Accordingly, there are some promises, which seem to be applied to the church in all ages, of blessings which should be conferred by their ministry. Thus it is said, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'<sup>k</sup> This scripture, though it may have a particular reference to their ministry to our Saviour, yet seems to be applicable also to his people. And that promise, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,'<sup>l</sup> is applicable to the people of God in all ages; as well as that in which it is said, concerning the ministry of angels to infants, that 'in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven.'<sup>m</sup> Moreover, the ministry of angels to dying saints, who are, according to what our Saviour says in the parable, 'carried,' by them, 'into Abraham's bosom,'<sup>n</sup> is true of all saints. It is expressly said, also, with a peculiar application to the gospel-dispensation, that the angels are 'all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.'<sup>o</sup> Hence, though their ministry, as to many circumstances of it, differs from what it was of old, there being nothing miraculous now attending it as formerly there was, yet it remains an undoubted truth, that they are and have been in all ages made use of, by the providence of God, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice. [See Note 3 C, below.]

I shall conclude this Head with a few cautions relating to this matter; as this doctrine is not to be laid down without certain restrictions, or limitations.

1. We must take heed, notwithstanding what has been said concerning the ministry of angels, that we do not take occasion to set aside the immediate influence or concern of the providence of God for his church. Whatever may be ascribed to angels, as second causes, our principal regard must be to him whose ministers they are. Nor are we to entertain even a remote thought that God has committed to them the government of the world or the church. This the apostle expressly denies, when he says, 'Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come.'<sup>p</sup>

2. The praise and glory of all their ministry is not to be ascribed to them, but to him who makes use of them; nor are we to pretend, at all times, to determine, that this or that particular dispensation of providence is by the immediate hand of God, and another by the ministry of angels. It is enough for us to say, that, though God does not need their assistance, he sometimes sets forth the sovereignty of his providence, and evinces his right to employ all his creatures at his pleasure, as well as gives an additional instance of his care of his churches, by employing them in extraordinary services for their good; though we cannot, at all times, distinguish between what is done by the immediate hand of God, and things performed by their ministry.

3. Whatever we assert concerning the ministry of angels, we must take heed that we do not regard them as objects of divine worship, or exercise that dependence on, or give that glory to, them which is due to God alone. Nor are we to suppose, that God employs them in those works which are the effects of his supernatural or almighty power; in which he deals with the hearts of his people, in a way more immediately conducive to their conversion and salvation.

l 2 Sam. xxiv. 16.  
n Luke xvi. 22.

k Psal. xci. 11, 12.  
o Heb. i. 14.

l Psal. xxxiv. 7.  
p Heb. ii. 5.

m Matt. xviii. 10.

[NOTE 3 C. *The Ministry of Angels.*—More is said by most theological writers, and even by Dr. Ridgeley, respecting the ministry of angels, than scripture seems to warrant. That angels do minister, in some manner, to the church, is certain; but that they minister in any such prominent way as theological writers usually represent them to do, is more than doubtful. Passages which intimate their ministration, either speak in general terms, or in rare instances of acting which are far

from being so signal as are popularly ascribed to their agency. Most, if not all, of the peculiarly glorious actions which they are usually said to perform, are affirmed of them on the authority of texts which appear to speak of the Angel of the Covenant,—the Angel who conducted Israel from Egypt, and made himself known, as ‘I AM,’ ‘Jehovah,’ ‘the God of Abraham.’ One instance quoted by Dr. Ridgeley, is that of the Angel who brought a cake and a cruse of oil to Elijah in the desert. Now, though, on the first mention of that person in the narrative, he is called simply, ‘an Angel,’ or ‘the Angel;’ yet he is afterwards called ‘the Angel of the Lord,’ or ‘the Angel Jehovah.’ Even his first appearance, too, was preceded by a prayer on the part of Elijah, which would seem to leave little doubt, or none, that he was the Angel of the Covenant: ‘It is enough: now, O Jehovah, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers,’ See I Kings xix. 4—7. Another instance quoted by Dr. Ridgeley is, that of the Angel who appeared to Balaam. Yet not only, in all of nine times in which he is mentioned in the narrative, is that Angel called ‘the Angel Jehovah;’ but he uses words, claims prerogatives, and is spoken of in language which seem appropriate only to Deity. To say nothing of its being difficult not to identify the Angel with ‘Jehovah’ in at least one part of the narrative, he appears throughout to speak and to influence Balaam in a divine manner. He says to the infatuated prophet, ‘Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me;’ and ‘Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak.’ Balaam, notwithstanding his own perverseness and his disposition to resist even a divine message, ‘bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face,’ when he beheld the angel; and ‘he said unto the Angel Jehovah, I have sinned, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again,’ Numb. xxii. 22—35. A third instance quoted by Dr. Ridgeley, is still more remarkable; and, even apart from the strong light thrown upon it by the context, appears very distinctly, not only to refer to the Angel of the Covenant, but to describe him as engaged in his mediatorial work of guardianship and care over his redeemed church: ‘The angel of the Lord,’ or the Angel Jehovah, ‘encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,’ Psal. xxxiv. 7. Who can imagine that the constant protection of God’s people, and the deliverance of them from enemies and dangers, are effected by any angel but him who ‘redeemed Jacob from all evil?’ The ascribing of such works to created angels—works which peculiarly belong to ‘Him who keeps Israel, and who slumbers not nor sleeps’—is just the crowning error into which men are liable to fall, who theorize minutely and systematically upon the ministry of angels. The sum of what scripture teaches on the subject appears to be that angels *do* minister, and that their ministry is all of such a nature as perfectly comports with the entire subordination of the creature, the supreme glory of the Deity, and the personal mediatorial administration of the Redeemer and Head of the church. How, in what particulars, or where they minister, we are not told. Enough is said respecting their ministry to show that all things are subordinated to the administration of Messiah for the gathering and well-being of his ransomed: and enough is withheld to caution every man who would trust only in the Lord, not to be ‘beguiled of his reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,’ Col. ii. 18—20.

When conjecture is let loose on any subject not fully revealed, it seldom fails to run a long and eccentric career of speculation. Not a few persons have not only ascribed particular provinces and specific classes of works or operations to angels, but also assigned a guardian or protecting angel to each human being, or at least to each saint and infant. There are just two passages on which they found this notion. One is that in which several disciples, astonished to be told that the apostle Peter was abroad from prison, said, ‘It is his angel,’ Acts xi. 15. But this proves only that some among the Jews, like not a few among the heathens, believed in the doctrine of guardian angels; for neither in itself, nor by light derived from the context, does it teach whether the doctrine be true or false. The other passage is that in which our Lord says, ‘Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that, in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,’ Matt. xviii. 10. Now, not only are angels here spoken of in the aggregate, but they are described as forming one great community with the saved, and as always employed in contemplating the heavenly manifestation of the divine glory. To say that believers have an interest in whatever is great and glorious in the universe—that ‘all things are theirs,’ whether the apostles, or ‘the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come,’—that theirs are the angels who continually behold the divine glory—that they are come to ‘the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven’—to say this respecting them is to exhibit a truly splendid reason why men should take heed ‘not to offend them,’ or to cast a stumbling-block in their way. But is it a reason equally intelligible to say that each of them has a guardian angel? Or if it be, would it not become more intelligible, and unutterably more glorious, if that angel, in regard to each as well as to all of them, were viewed as the Angel who made his Covenant with ancient Israel, and led them through the wilderness into the promised land? Instead of speculating as to what may or may not be in a matter not revealed,—instead of spending efforts to find some assurance for the conjecture that there are created guardian angels—the mind of a believer delights to meditate on a divine angelic guardianship of which he is made certain. For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old,’ Isa. lxiii. 8, 9.

Another popular conjecture is, that there are two great classes of angels, or that there are angels and archangels. Now the word ‘archangel’ occurs in scripture only in the singular number, and appears to denote but one person. The etymological structure of it, too, would seem to intimate that the



person whom it designates is 'the ruler of angels.' Paul speaks jointly of 'the voice of the archangel and the trump of God,' not indeed, as if they were the same in identity, yet as if they were the same in dignity. Jude, it is true, speaks of 'Michael, the archangel,'—a phrase which, by itself, might possibly be construed to imply that Michael is one of a class. But the derivation or intrinsic import of the name Michael is, 'Who is like God?' and he is described, by the prophet Daniel, as 'the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, who shall stand up, and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,' Dan. xii. 1—3. Similar remarks might be made respecting 'the angel Gabriel;' whose name and recorded ministrations are so peculiar as at least to suggest great caution to an interpreter of the texts of scripture in which he is mentioned.—ED.]

## PROVIDENCE TOWARD MAN IN PARADISE.

**QUESTION XX.** *What was the Providence of God toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

**ANSWER.** The providence of God toward man, in the estate wherein he was created, was, the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help, affording him communion with himself, instituting the Sabbath, entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

In this Answer, we have an account of the providence of God, respecting the outward and the spiritual concerns of man.

### *Man's outward Condition in Innocence.*

1. As to man's outward state, we have an account, first, of God's fixing the place of his abode. This was in paradise, a very large and most delightful garden, of God's own planting,—an epitome of all the beauties of nature, which, as it were, presented to his view the whole world in miniature, so that herein he might, without travelling many miles, behold the most beautiful landscape which the world afforded, and partake of all the fruits with which it was stored. The whole world, indeed, was given him for a possession; but this was, as it were, a storehouse of its choicest fruits, and the peculiar seat of his residence.

We find the word 'paradise' used, in scripture, sometimes to signify a delightful garden, and sometimes, in a metaphorical sense, to signify heaven.<sup>a</sup> From the latter application of it, we may conclude that the earthly paradise in which man was placed, was a kind of type of the heavenly blessedness, which, had he retained his integrity, he would have been possessed of, and which they, who are saved by Christ, shall be brought to. Here we may take notice of the conjectures of some ancient and modern writers concerning it; more especially as to what part of the world it was situated in, and whether it is now in existence, or to be found in any part at this day. Many have given great scope to their wit and fancy about the situation of paradise; and some conjectures are so absurd, that they hardly deserve to be mentioned.

Some have thought that paradise was situated in some place, superior to and remote from the globe of the earth, in which we live. But they have not the least shadow of reason for their supposition; and nothing can be more contrary to the account we have of it in scripture.—Others fancy, that there was really no such place, but that the whole account we have of it in the second chapter of Genesis is allegorical. Origen, Philo, and some modern writers, are of this opinion. But no one can justly assert it who duly weighs the historical account in scripture, with that sobriety and impartiality that he ought. On the same principle of reasoning on which it is founded, we may turn anything into an allegory, and so never come to any determinate sense of scripture, but what the wild fancies of men suggest.—Others again have supposed that the whole world was one great garden or paradise, and that, when man was placed in it, it was described as a garden, to signify the beauties

of nature, before they were lost by the curse consequent on sin. But this cannot be true, because God first made man, and then 'planted the garden,' and afterwards 'put him into it;' and, after the fall, he 'drove him out of it.'<sup>s</sup>

Passing by these groundless conjectures, something may be determined with more certainty concerning the situation of paradise, and more agreeable to scripture. It was situated in Mesopotamia, near Babylon, to the north-east of the land of Canaan. This appears from the country adjacent to it, which is called 'Eden,' out of which 'the river that watered it' is said to proceed.<sup>t</sup> This country was afterwards known by the same name, and is elsewhere reckoned among those that the king of Assyria had conquered.<sup>u</sup> Again, two of the rivers which proceeded from Eden and watered paradise were well-known in after-ages, namely, Hiddekel, or Tigris, and Euphrates. The latter especially is often mentioned in scripture. It is certain that these rivers were in Mesopotamia; and hence the garden of Eden was there. And as it was the finest plantation in the world, this was one of the most pleasant climates therein; not situated too far north, so as to be frozen up in winter; nor too near the equator southward, so as to be scorched with excessive heat in summer. This was the place of man's residence at first. But if any are so curious in their inquiries as to desire to know the particular spot of ground in which it was, this is not to be determined. For, though the place where paradise was must be still in being as much as any other part of the world, yet there are no remains of it which can give any satisfaction to the curiosity of men with respect to its particular locality. It is certain that it was soon destroyed as a garden, partly by the flaming sword, or stream of fire, which was designed to guard the way of the tree of life that man might no more come to it, and which intimated that that tree ceased to be an ordinance for his faith concerning the way in which eternal life was to be obtained. It is more than probable that this stream of fire, which is called a flaming sword, destroyed or burnt up the garden. The curse of God, also, by which the earth brought forth briars and thorns, affected this as well as other parts of the world; so that, on account of that curse, and for want of culture, the garden soon lost its beauty, and so could not well be distinguished from the barren wilderness. Let me add that, since the flood, the face of the earth is so altered that it is a vain thing for travellers to search for any traces of it, or to pretend to determine within a few miles the place where it was.

2. Having considered the place of man's abode, we have next an account of his secular employment therein. He was appointed to dress or manure the garden. Here we may take occasion to observe, that a secular employment is not inconsistent with perfect holiness, or with a person's enjoying communion with God, and that blessedness which arises from it. On the contrary, it may be reckoned an advantage, inasmuch as it is a preservative against idleness, and those temptations which often attend it. Yet though man was employed in this work, it was performed without the labour, fatigue, and uneasiness, which now attend it, or those disappointments and perplexities which men are now exposed to, whose secular callings are a relief against poverty, and a necessary means for their comfortable subsistence in the world. But had not man fallen, secular callings would not have been attended with those inconveniences which accompany them now, and which are the consequence of the curse entailed by sin. Accordingly it is said, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.'<sup>x</sup>

3. We have next an account of the provision which providence made for man's subsistence. The great variety of fruits which the earth produced, were given him for food, the tree of knowledge of good and evil only excepted. Here we may observe the difference between the condition of man in paradise, and that of the saints in heaven; in which the bodies of men shall be supported without food, when changed and adapted to a way of living inconsistent with the present state. This seems to be the meaning of that expression of the apostle, 'Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them.'<sup>y</sup>

We may here inquire, whether the fruits of the earth were the only food which

r Gen. ii. 8.

x Gen. iii. 19.

s Gen. iii. 24.

y 1 Cor. vi. 13.

t Gen. ii. 8.

u Isa. xxxvii. 12.



man lived on, not only before the fall, but in several following ages ; or whether flesh was eaten before the flood? It seems most agreeable to the dictates of nature, to suppose that man would never have found out such an expedient, as killing the beasts and eating their flesh to subsist him, had he not received from God an express direction to do it, which rendered it a duty. We have a particular intimation of this grant given to Noah after the deluge, when God says, ' Every moving thing that liveth, namely, every clean beast, ' shall be meat for you. ' <sup>z</sup> From this some conclude that there was no flesh eaten before the flood, and that the distinction which we read of concerning clean and unclean beasts which Noah brought with him into the ark, either respected such as were fit or unfit for sacrifice, or, by a kind of prolepsis, denoted what should be clean or unclean when God afterwards gave them for food. The principal reason which induces some to suppose this is, that when God directed Noah and his posterity to eat flesh, and considered this as a peculiar gift of providence, he said, ' Even as the green herb have I given you all things. ' This is understood to have a meaning as if he had said, ' As when I created man at first, I gave him every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, that it should be to him for meat ; so now have I given you all things, that is, have made a considerable addition to your food, by giving you a liberty to feed on flesh. ' <sup>a</sup> Here, it is alleged, the manner of expression seems to intimate that, as respects an addition being made, man's food differed from what it was before. This conjecture—for that is the most that I can call it—seems to me to have equal if not greater probability than the contrary or commonly received opinion. And, if the conjecture be just, we may, by comparing the food by which man subsisted with the length of his life in the first ages of the world, infer that the most simple diet is the most wholesome. When men become slaves to their appetites, and pamper themselves with variety of meats, they, as it were, dig their own graves, and render their lives shorter than they would be according to the common course of nature.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that man's not feeding on flesh, was such a limitation of his happiness as seems inconsistent with a state of innocency. But for man to feed on what the earth produced, was no mortification or unhappiness to him ; especially if it were, by a peculiar blessing of providence, adapted to, as well as designed for, his nourishment, as being his only food ; for in this case, none of those consequences would ensue which would now attend a person's being wholly confined to it. If this way of living was so far from destroying or weakening the constitution of man, that it tended, by the peculiar blessing of God, not only to nourish but to maintain health, and was medicinal as well as nourishing, and so conducive to long life ; and if the fruits of the earth, before that alteration which they probably sustained by the deluge, or at least before the curse of God was brought upon the earth by man's sin, differed vastly from what they now are, as to both the pleasantness of their taste and their virtue to nourish,—if these things are supposed, it cannot be reckoned any degree of unhappiness, that man in his state of innocence had no other food than what the earth produced. This, however, I reckon among the number of those probable conjectures, concerning which it is not very material to determine whether they are true or false.

4. God gave man dominion over all creatures in this world, or as it is expressed, he ' put them under his feet. ' <sup>b</sup> This argues not only a superiority of nature to them, but a propriety in them, and a liberty to use them, to the glory of God and man's own advantage. No creature was in itself a snare to him, or a necessary occasion of sin ; for as the creature at first, to use the apostle's phrase, was not liable to ' the bondage of corruption, ' so it was not ' subject to vanity, ' <sup>c</sup> by any inclination that he had in his nature to abuse it. As for those creatures which are now formidable to man, as the lion, the tiger, &c., they had not, as is more than probable, their present fierceness of nature, before the fall of man, and the curse consequent upon it ; so that our first parents could make as much use of them, and had them as much under their command, as we have the tamest creatures. It is not improbable, too, that they did not prey upon and devour one another, as now

they do, since providence provided the produce of the earth 'for their food,'<sup>d</sup> so that, by a natural instinct, they sought it only thence. The beasts devouring one another, therefore, as well as their being injurious to man, is a standing mark of the curse of God consequent on sin. We read of a time in which the church is given to expect, that 'the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.'<sup>e</sup> This, if it shall be literally accomplished, is an intimation that it was so at first; as it contains a prediction of the restoring of this part of nature, in some respects, to its first estate. But, supposing it to be only a metaphorical description of the church's happy state in future ages, the prophet's using the metaphor argues the possibility of the thing having been literally true, and that it is a consequence of man's fallen state that it is not so now. Such conjectures as these may be excused, if we do not set them forth as articles of faith, or think it worth our while to contend with those who deny them.

5. God ordained marriage for man's help; and that not only in what concerns the conveniencies of this life, but as a means to promote his spiritual welfare, such a nearness of relation imposing the strongest obligations to promote it. Another design of marriage was that the world might be increased, without any sinful expedient. In the institution of it in paradise, there was a standing precedent to be observed by mankind in all succeeding ages, that hereby the unlawfulness of polygamy, and other violations of the seventh commandment, might evidently appear.<sup>f</sup>

#### *Man's Communion with God in Paradise.*

We proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about man's spiritual concerns; and that in three respects, namely, in granting him communion with himself, in instituting the sabbath, and in entering into a covenant of life with him.

Man, in the state in which he was created, was favoured with communion with God. This supposes a state of friendship, and is opposed to estrangement, separation, or alienation from him. As the result of it, God was pleased to manifest his glory to man. Nor did he do this only in an objective way, or merely by giving him a conviction that he is a God of infinite perfection; for this a person may have, who is destitute of communion with him. But God displayed his perfections to him in such a manner as to let him see his interest in them, and to show him that, as long as he retained his integrity, they were engaged to make him happy. Moreover, this communion was attended with access to God, without fear, and with a great delight in his presence. Man, being without guilt, was not afraid to draw nigh to God; and, being without spot, as made after his image, he had no shame or confusion of face when standing before him as a holy, sin-hating God. The communion consisted also in his being made partaker of those divine influences, whereby he was excited to put forth acts of holy obedience to, and love and delight in God, which were a spring and fountain of spiritual joy.

Yet, though this communion was perfect in its kind, as agreeable to the state in which he was at first, it was not so perfect, as to degree, as it would have been, had he continued in his integrity, till he was possessed of those blessings which would have been the consequence; for then the soul would have been more enlarged, and made receptive of greater degrees of communion, which he would have enjoyed in heaven. He was, indeed, at first in a holy and happy state, yet he was not in heaven; and, though he enjoyed God, it was in ordinances, and not in an immediate way. Accordingly, it was necessary for him constantly to address himself to him, for the maintenance of that spiritual life which he had received together with his being. This was not inconsistent with a state of innocency, any more than the maintenance of our natural lives, by the use of proper food, is inconsistent with health, or argues an infirm or sickly constitution, or any need of medicine to recover it. Yet our lives would be more confirmed, and, if we may so express it, less precarious, if God had ordained that they should have been sup-

<sup>d</sup> Gen. i. 30.

<sup>e</sup> Isa. lxxv. 25.

<sup>f</sup> See Vol. II. Quest. cxxxix.



ported without these means. This may serve to illustrate the difference which there is between the happiness which the saints enjoy in God's immediate presence in heaven, and that which is expected as the result of our daily access to him in ordinances, wherein we hope for some farther degree of communion with him. The former, man would have attained to, had he stood; the latter distinguished that state in which he was while in innocency. But as there can be no communion with God unless what has a proportionable degree of delight and pleasure attending it, our first parents may be said to have experienced such pleasure and delight. This contributed to the happiness of that state in which they were; though their joy in regard to it was not so complete as that is which those possess who have not only an assurance of the impossibility of losing that communion which they have with God at present, but have arrived at a state of perfect blessedness.

### *The Institution of the Sabbath in Paradise.*

God sanctified and instituted the sabbath for man's more immediate access to him, and, that he might express his gratitude for the blessings he was made partaker of, and might have a recess from that secular employment, which, as was before observed, he was engaged in. This was, therefore, a great privilege. Indeed, the sabbath was a pledge or shadow of an everlasting sabbath, which he would have enjoyed in heaven, had he not forfeited and lost it by his fall. We shall have occasion, however, to speak more particularly on this subject under the fourth commandment.<sup>g</sup> All we shall add at present, is, that the sabbath was instituted as a day of rest for man, even while he remained in a state of innocency. This appears from its being blessed and sanctified, on occasion of God's resting from his work of creation. It was hence, at that time, set apart to be observed by man.

It is objected, that it might then be sanctified with the view that man should observe it after his fall, or, in particular, at a subsequent time when the observance of it was enjoined. We reply, that there never was any ordinance instituted but what was designed to be observed by man immediately after its institution. Now, the sanctification of the Sabbath imports as much as its institution, or the setting of it apart for a holy use. We cannot, therefore, but suppose, that God designed that it should be observed by man in innocency.

It is farther objected, that it was inconsistent with the happy state in which man was created, for God to appoint a day of rest for him, to be then observed; for rest supposes labour, and is consequently more agreeable to that state into which he brought himself by sin, when, by the sweat of his brow, he was to eat bread. Now, it is true that man, in innocency, was not exposed to that uneasiness and fatigue which attended his employment after his fall, and that the work he was engaged in was not a burthen to him, so as to make a day of rest needful for him to give him ease. A cessation from a secular employment, however, attended with a more immediate access to God in his holy institutions, wherein he might hope for a greater degree of communion with him, was not inconsistent with that degree of holiness and happiness in which he was created, which, as was before observed, was short of the heavenly blessedness. Hence, though heaven is a state in which the saints enjoy an everlasting Sabbath, it does not follow that man, how happy soever he was in paradise, was so far favoured there, that a day of rest was inconsistent with that state.

### *The Covenant with Man in Paradise.*

We shall proceed to inquire how the providence of God had a more immediate reference to the spiritual or eternal happiness of man, in his entering into a covenant of life with him. Under this Head we are to consider the personal concerns of our first parents in the covenant.

1. That the dispensation they were under was that of a covenant, is allowed by

most who acknowledge the imputation of Adam's sin, and the universal corruption of nature, as consequent upon it. Some call it, 'a Covenant of Innocency,' inasmuch as it was made with man while he was in a state of innocency. Others call it, 'a Covenant of Works,' because perfect obedience was enjoined, as the condition of it. In this light, it is opposed to the covenant of grace; as there was no provision made in it for any display of grace, as there is in that covenant which we are now under. In this Answer, however, it is called 'the Covenant of Life,' as having respect to the blessings which it promised. It may to some seem indifferent whether it ought to be termed a covenant, or a law of innocency. Indeed, we would not contend about the use of a word, if many did not design, by what they say concerning its being a law and not properly a covenant, to prepare the way for the denial of the imputation of Adam's sin, or did not, at the same time, consider him as no other than the natural head of his posterity. This, if it were allowed, would effectually overthrow the doctrine of original sin, as stated in some following Answers. We must endeavour to prove, therefore, that man was not merely under a law, but under a covenant of works. That we may proceed with more clearness, we shall premise some things, in general, concerning the difference between a law and a covenant.

A law is the revealed will of a sovereign, in which a debt of obedience is demanded, and, in case of disobedience, a punishment threatened, in proportion to the nature of the offence. Here we must consider, that as a subject is bound to obey a law, so he cannot, except in case of disobedience, justly be deprived of that to which he has a right. Hence, obedience to a law gives him a right to impunity, but to nothing more. A covenant, on the contrary, gives a person a right, upon his fulfilling the conditions of it, to all those privileges which are stipulated or promised in it. This may be illustrated, by considering it as applied to human forms of government. In these it is supposed that every subject is possessed of some things which he has a natural or political right to, and which he cannot justly be deprived of, unless he forfeit them by violating the law which, as a subject, he is bound to obey. Now, though his obedience gives him a right to impunity, or to the undisturbed possession of his life and estate, it does not entitle him to any privilege to which he had no natural right. A king is not obliged to advance a subject to great honours, because he has not forfeited his life and estate by rebellion. If, however, he had promised him, as an act of favour, that he would confer such honours upon him, on condition of his yielding obedience in some particular instances, he would then have a right to them,—not as yielding obedience to a law, but as fulfilling the conditions of a covenant. This may be farther illustrated, by considering the case of Mephibosheth. He had a natural and legal right to his life and estate, which descended to him from his father Jonathan, because he behaved himself peaceably, and had not rebelled against David. But this did not entitle him to those special favours which David conferred upon him, such as 'eating bread at his table continually;'<sup>b</sup> for these were the result of a covenant between David and Jonathan, in which David promised that he would show kindness to his house after him. Now, in the same way, if we consider our first parents only as under a law, their perfect obedience to it would have given them a right to impunity, since punishment supposes a crime; so that God could not, consistently with his perfections, have punished them, had they not rebelled against him. I do not say that God could not, in consistency with his perfections, have taken away the blessings which he conferred upon them, as creatures, in a way of sovereignty; but this he could not do as a judge. Man, therefore, would have been entirely exempted from punishment, as long as he did not fall. This, however, would not, in the least, have entitled him to any superadded happiness, unless there had been a promise made which gave him ground to expect it, in case he yielded obedience. And if there were, then that dispensation which before contained the form of a law would, by having this circumstance added to it, assume the form of a covenant, and so give him a right to the superadded happiness promised in it, according to the tenor of the covenant. If we can prove, then, as we shall endeavour to do be-



fore we dismiss this subject, not only that man was obliged to yield perfect obedience, as being under a law, but that he was given to expect a superadded happiness, consisting either in the grace of confirmation in his present state, or in the heavenly blessedness, it will follow, that he would have had a right to it, in case of yielding that obedience, according to the tenor of the dispensation as being of the nature of a covenant. This I apprehend to be the just difference between a law and a covenant, as applicable to the present argument. We must hence conclude, that the dispensation which man was under contained the ideas both of a law and of a covenant. His relation to God, as a creature, obliged him to yield perfect obedience to the divine will, as having the form of a law; and this perfect obedience, had it been performed, would have given him a right to the heavenly blessedness, in virtue of that promise which God was pleased to give to man in this dispensation, as being of the nature of a covenant. This will farther appear, when we consider the blessing promised in the covenant.

2. The blessing promised was life. The word 'life' in scripture, is used sometimes to signify temporal, and, at other times, spiritual and eternal blessings. We have these senses joined together in the apostle's words, where we read of 'the life that now is, and that which is to come.'<sup>i</sup> Sometimes, also, 'life' and 'blessing,' or blessedness, are put together, and opposed to death as expressing all the ingredients of evil.<sup>k</sup> When, in doing this, Moses exhorts the Israelites 'to choose life,' he does not intend merely a natural life, or outward blessings; for these every one chooses, while many are with difficulty persuaded to make choice of spiritual life. In connection with our present subject, we consider life as including both spiritual and eternal blessedness. It is thus to be understood, when our Saviour says, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life;'<sup>l</sup> and also when he says, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'<sup>m</sup> We must conclude, therefore, that Adam having a promise of such a life made to him, on condition of perfect obedience, was given to expect some privileges which he was not then possessed of, and which included the enjoyment of the heavenly blessedness. Hence, the dispensation which he was under may well be called a covenant of life.

But, as this is a subject so necessary to be insisted on, we shall offer some arguments to prove it. Some have thought that it might be proved from Hos. vi. 7, which they choose to render, 'They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant;' whence they conclude, that Adam was under a covenant. They thus suppose that the word Adam is taken for the proper name of our first parent; and it is probable that it is so understood elsewhere. Job, for example, says, 'If I covered my transgressions as Adam,'<sup>n</sup> alluding to those trifling excuses which Adam, immediately after his fall,<sup>o</sup> made to palliate his sin. There are some expositors who conclude, that the interpretation now stated is no improbable sense of the text in Hosea.<sup>p</sup> I would not, however, lay much stress on it; because the words may be rendered, as they are in our translation, 'They, like men,' that is, according to the custom of vain man, 'have transgressed the covenant;' or, they are no better than the rest of mankind, who are disposed to break covenant with God. In the same sense the apostle uses the word, when, reproving the Corinthians, he says, 'Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?'<sup>q</sup> Passing this by, therefore, let us inquire, whether the doctrine in question may not, in some measure, be proved from that scripture which is often quoted for the purpose, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'<sup>r</sup> From this it is argued, that if man had retained his integrity, he would have been made partaker of the heavenly blessedness. Many, indeed, are so far from thinking this an argument to prove the fact of a covenant, that they bring it as an objection against it. They allege that hereby God gave man to understand, that he was not, pursuant to the nature of a covenant, to expect any farther degree of happiness than what he was already possessed of; but that, agreeably to the sanc-

i 1 Tim. iv. 8.

m Matt. xix. 17.

p Vid. Grot. in Hos. vi. 7. Mihi Latina hæc interpretatio non displicet, ut sensus hic sit: sicut Adam, quia pactum meum violavit, expulsus est ex Hedene; ita æquum est ex sua terra expelli.

q 1 Cor. iii. 3.

1.

k Deut. xxx. 19.

n Job xxxi. 33.

l Matt. vii. 14.

o Gen. iii. 12.

r Gen. ii. 17.

tion of a law, death was to be inflicted, in case of disobedience, and life, that is, the state in which he was created, should be continued, as long as he retained his integrity. When a legislator, they add, threatens his subjects with death in the event of their being guilty of rebellion, nothing can be inferred but that, if they do not rebel, they shall be continued in the quiet possession of what they had a natural right to as subjects, and not that they should be advanced to a higher degree of dignity. This sense of the text, indeed, enervates the force of the argument founded on it to prove that man was under a covenant. Yet I would not wholly give it up, as containing nothing to support the argument we are defending. For this threatening was denounced, not only to signify God's will to punish sin, or the certain event that should follow it, but as a motive to obedience; and it therefore includes a promise of life, in case he retained his integrity. The question therefore is, What is meant by this life? or, has it any respect to the heavenly blessedness? In answer to this, I see no reason to conclude but that it has; since that is so often understood by the word 'life' in scripture. Thus it is said, 'Hear, and your soul shall live;' <sup>s</sup> and, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;' <sup>t</sup> so also in many other places. Why, then, should not 'life,' in this place, be taken in the same sense? So, on the other hand, when death is threatened, in several scriptures, it implies a privation of the heavenly blessedness, and not merely a loss of those blessings which we actually possess. Moreover, Adam could not but know God to be the Fountain of blessedness, otherwise he would have been very defective in knowledge; and, when he looked into himself, he would find that he was capable of a greater degree of blessedness than he at present enjoyed, and what is more, he had a desire for it implanted in his very nature. Now, what can be inferred hence, but that he would conclude that God, who gave him these enlarged desires, would, after some farther degree of happiness arising from communion with him, give him to expect it, in case he retained that holiness which was implanted in his nature?

But that it may further appear that our first parents were given to expect a greater degree of happiness, and consequently that the dispensation which they were under was properly federal, let it be considered that the advantages which Christ came into the world to procure for his people, and which are promised to them in the second covenant, are in substance <sup>u</sup> the same as those which man would have enjoyed, had he not fallen. Christ 'came to seek and to save that which was lost,' and to procure the recovery of forfeited blessings; yet what he came into the world to purchase for them was eternal life. This would have been enjoyed, therefore, if there had been no need of purchasing it, that is, if man had retained his integrity. The apostle, speaking of the end of Christ's coming into the world, observes, <sup>x</sup> not only that it was to 'redeem us from the curse,' or the condemning sentence of the law, but that his redeemed ones might be made partakers of 'the blessing of Abraham,' which was a very comprehensive one, including that God would be 'his God, his shield, and exceeding great reward.' <sup>y</sup> The same apostle elsewhere speaks of Christ's having 'redeemed them that were under the law,' that is, the curse of the violated law or covenant, 'that we might receive the adoption of sons;' <sup>z</sup> that is, that we might be made partakers of all the privileges of God's children, which certainly include eternal life. There is another scripture which farther supports this argument. 'What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.' <sup>a</sup> This is as if the apostle had said, 'According to the tenor of the first covenant, eternal life was not to be expected, since it was become weak, or could not give it, because man could not yield perfect obedience, which was the condition of giving it; but God's sending his own Son to perform this obedience for us, was an expe-

<sup>s</sup> Isa. lv. 3.

<sup>t</sup> Matt. xix. 17.

<sup>u</sup> When I speak of the advantages being in substance the same, it is supposed, that there are some circumstances of glory, in which that salvation, that was purchased by Christ, differs from that happiness which Adam would have been possessed of, had he persisted in his integrity.

<sup>x</sup> Gal. iii. 13, 14<sup>t</sup>

<sup>y</sup> Gen. xvii. 7. compared with chap. xv. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Gal. iv. 4, 5.

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 3, 4.



dient for our attaining that life, which we could not otherwise have enjoyed.' This seems to be the general scope and design of the apostle in this text; and it is agreeable to the sense of many other scriptures, which speak of the advantages that believers attain by Christ's death, as compared with the disadvantages which man sustained by Adam's fall. It follows therefore, that, had Adam stood, he and all his posterity would have attained eternal life.

We have thus endeavoured to prove, that God entered into covenant with Adam, inasmuch as he was given to expect, that, if he had yielded perfect obedience, he should have been possessed of the heavenly blessedness. But supposing this not to be allowed, and the arguments brought to prove it reckoned inconclusive, it would be sufficient to our present purpose, and would argue the dispensation to which Adam was under to be that of a covenant, if God had only promised him the grace of confirmation, and not to transplant him from the earthly to the heavenly paradise. Such a privilege as this, which would have rendered his fall impossible, would have contained so advantageous a circumstance, as to the state in which he was, as would have plainly proved the dispensation he was under to be federal. Now, to be confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness, was necessary to render that state of blessedness in which he was created complete. Whatever advantages he was possessed of, it would have been a great alloy to them to consider that it was possible for him to lose them, or through any act of inadvertency, in complying with a temptation, to fall and ruin himself for ever. If the saints in heaven, who are advanced to a greater degree of blessedness, were not confirmed in it, if it was possible for them to lose or fall from it, their joy would be rendered incomplete. Much more would the happiness of Adam have been so, had he been to continue for ever without the privilege of confirmation.—Again, if he had not had ground to expect the grace of confirmation in holiness and happiness, upon his yielding perfect obedience, then his perfect obedience could not, in any respect, in propriety of speaking, be said to have been conditional, unless you suppose it a condition of the blessings which he was then possessed of. But this seems not agreeable to the idea conveyed by the word 'condition,' which is considered as a motive to excite obedience, taken from some blessing consequent upon observing it.—If, however, this consideration be not allowed to have sufficient weight, let me add that it is agreeable to, and tends very much to advance the glory of the divine goodness, for God not to leave an innocent creature in a state of perpetual uncertainty, as to the continuance of his holiness and happiness. Yet this he would have done, had he not promised Adam the grace of confirmation, whereby he would, by his immediate interposition, have prevented every thing which might occasion his fall.—Our position may be farther argued, from the method of God's dealing with other sinless creatures whom he designed to make completely blessed, and so monuments of his abundant goodness. Thus he dealt with the holy angels, and thus he will deal with his saints in another world. The former are, the other shall be, when arrived there, confirmed in holiness and happiness. And why should we suppose that the goodness of God should be less glorified towards man at first, had he retained his integrity?—Moreover, the dispensation of providence which Adam was under, seems to carry in it the nature of a state of probation. If he was a probationer, it must either have been for the heavenly glory, or at least for a farther degree of happiness, containing this grace of confirmation, which is the least that can be supposed if there were any promise given him. Now, if all other dispensations of providence towards man contain so many great and precious promises as it is certain they do, can we suppose that man, in his state of innocency, had no promise given him? And, if he had, then I cannot but conclude, that God entered into covenant with him, which was the thing to be proved.

It is objected that the apostle, in some of the scriptures but now referred to, calls the dispensation which Adam was under, 'a law;' and that therefore we have no right to call it a covenant. Now, it is true that it is often called 'a law.' But let it be considered, that there were two ideas included in it, which are not opposite to, or inconsistent with each other, namely, that of a law and that of a covenant. As man was under a natural and indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience, and was liable to eternal death in case of disobedience, it had in it the form and

sanction of a law. This, however, is not inconsistent with anything in what we have endeavoured to maintain, that there was something added to it of the nature of a covenant,—which is all that we pretend to prove. The dispensation, therefore, may justly take its denomination from the one idea or the other, provided when one is mentioned the other be not excluded. If we call it a law, it was such a law as had annexed to it a promise of superadded blessedness; and if we call it a covenant, it had, notwithstanding, the obligation of a law, being made with a subject who was bound, without regard to his arbitrary choice, to fulfil the law's demands.

It is objected against what has been said concerning man's having a promise of the heavenly blessedness given him upon condition of obedience, that this is a privilege peculiarly adapted to the gospel-dispensation, and that our Saviour was the first who made it known to the world. 'Life and immortality,' the objectors remind us, 'were brought to light through the gospel, and made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ;'<sup>b</sup> and they hence infer that these were not made known by the law, and that consequently there was no promise of them made to Adam in innocence. Again, the apostle says that 'the way into the holiest of all,' that is, into heaven, 'was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing,' till Christ came, 'who obtained eternal redemption for us.'<sup>c</sup> From this they argue, that we have no reason to conclude that Adam had any promise or expectation of the heavenly blessedness; and that consequently the argument based on such a promise to prove that the dispensation he was under was that of a covenant, is not conclusive. Now, it seems very strange that any should infer from the scriptures here quoted, that eternal life was altogether unknown in the world till Christ came into it. In the former of them, when the apostle speaks of 'life and immortality as brought to light by the gospel,' nothing else can be intended, but that this is more fully revealed by the gospel than it was before, or that Christ revealed it as a purchased possession, in which respect it could not be revealed before. If this be compared with the revelation given to Adam of life and immortality in the first covenant, it may be distinguished from it; for though the heavenly blessedness was made known in that revelation, it was not considered as including the idea of salvation, as it does to us when revealed in the gospel. As to the latter scripture concerning 'the way into the holiest of all,' that is, into heaven, 'not being made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing,' the meaning is, that the way of our redemption by Jesus Christ was not so clearly revealed, or revealed with such circumstances of glory, under the ceremonial law as it is by the gospel, or that, at least, whatever discoveries were made of it, the promises had not their full accomplishment till Christ came and erected the gospel-dispensation. But this does not, in the least, militate against the argument we are maintaining. We have thus considered the blessing promised in the covenant, namely, life; from which it farther appears to have been a federal dispensation.

3. We are now to consider the condition of man's obtaining this blessing. This, as is expressed in this Answer, was personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience. Man was obliged to perform obedience, agreeably to his character as a subject, and thereby to own the sovereignty of his Creator and Lawgiver, and the equity of his law, and his right to govern him according to it. This obligation was natural, necessary, and indispensable.—Moreover, the obedience was to be personal, that is, not performed by any other in his behalf, and imputed to him as his obedience was to be imputed to all his posterity. In that respect, it would not have been personal as applied to them. Nor was the obedience required of Adam such as should be imputed to him, as the obedience of Christ is imputed to us in the second covenant.—Again, it was to be perfect, without the least defect, and extending to both the heart and the life. He was obliged to do every thing which God required, as well as to abstain from every thing which he forbade. We are not to suppose, therefore, that it was only his eating the forbidden fruit which would ruin him, though that was the particular sin by which he fell; for his doing any other thing which was in itself sinful, or his neglecting any thing which was required, would equally have occasioned his fall.



From man's obligation to yield obedience to the divine law, it follows that there needed to be an intimation given of the rule or matter of his obedience, and consequently that the law of God should be made known to him; for it is absolutely necessary that a law should be not only enacted but promulgated, before the subject is bound to obey it. Now the law of God was made known to man in two ways, agreeably to its twofold distinction. First, the law of nature was written on his heart; and in writing it there, the wisdom of God did as much discover itself, as in the matter of the law itself. In this respect, the whole law of nature might be said to be made known to man at once. The knowledge of it was communicated to him, with the powers and faculties of his soul, and was, as it were, instamped on his nature. He might, therefore, as well plead that he was not an intelligent creature, as that he was destitute of the knowledge of the law. Again, there being several other positive laws to which man was obliged to yield obedience, these, though they could not, properly speaking, be said to be written on his heart, were, notwithstanding, communicated to him. Whether the communication was made all at once, or at various times, is not for us to determine. This, however, we must conclude, that these positive laws could not be known in a way of reasoning, as the law of nature might. But as we have sufficient ground to conclude, that God was pleased, in different ways and times, to communicate his mind and will to man, we are not to suppose that man was destitute of the knowledge of all those positive laws which he was obliged to obey. What the number of these laws was we know not. But as there have been in all ages various positive laws relating to instituted worship, Adam, doubtless, had many such laws revealed to him, though not mentioned in scripture. This I cannot but observe, because some persons use modes of speaking about this matter as if there had been no other positive law, which man was obliged to obey, but that of his not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or, together with it, that which related to the observance of the sabbath.

The obedience which man was to perform was to be perpetual. By this we are not to understand that it was to be performed to eternity under the notion of a condition of the covenant, though it certainly was as this covenant contained the obligation of a law. The reason of this is very obvious. When any thing is performed as a condition of obtaining a subsequent blessing, it is supposed that this blessing is not to be conferred till the condition is performed. But this is inconsistent with the eternal duration of the obedience on the performance of which the heavenly blessedness was to be conferred. Hence, though divines often use the word 'perpetual,' when treating on this subject, it must be understood with this limitation, that man was to obey, without any interruption or defect, so long as he remained in a state of probation, and that his obedience had a peculiar reference to the dispensation as of a federal character. When, however, this state of trial was over, and the blessing promised on this condition conferred, then, though the same obedience was to be performed to eternity, it would not be considered as the condition of a covenant, but as the obligation of a law.

This leads us to inquire, whether we may not, with some degree of probability, without being guilty of a sinful curiosity, determine any thing relating to the time of man's continuance in a state of trial, before the blessing promised, at least that part of it which consisted in the grace of confirmation, would have been conferred upon him. Though I would not enter into any subject which is over-curious, or pretend to determine that which is altogether uncertain, yet, I think, this is not to be reckoned so, especially if we be not too peremptory, or exceed the bounds of modesty, in what respects this matter. All that I shall say concerning it is, that it seems very probable that our first parents would have passed from this state of probation, and would have attained the grace of confirmation, which is a considerable circumstance in the blessing promised in the covenant, as soon as they had children arrived to an age capable of obeying or sinning themselves. But how long this would have been, it is a vain thing to pretend to determine. The reason why divines suppose that Adam's state of probation would have continued no longer is, that these children must then either be supposed to have been confirmed in that state of holiness and happiness, in which they were, or not. If they had been confirmed in it, they would have attained the blessings of the covenant, before Adam

had fulfilled the condition of it. If they had not been confirmed, it was possible for them to have fallen, and yet for him to have stood; and so, contrary to the tenor of the covenant, his performing the condition of it would not have procured its blessing for them. When our first parents would have been removed from paradise to heaven, and so have attained the perfection of the blessings contained in this covenant, it would be a vain, presumptuous, and unprofitable thing to inquire. [See Note 3 D, p. 385.]

4. The last thing observed in this Answer, is what some call the seals annexed to the covenant, as an ordinance designed to confirm our first parents' faith in it. These were the two trees mentioned in the second chapter of Genesis. The tree of life, however, was more properly called a seal, than the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Concerning the tree of life, several things may be observed. It was a single tree; not, as some suppose, a species of trees, bearing one sort of fruit. This is evident from its being expressly said, that it was planted 'in the midst of the garden.'<sup>d</sup>—Again, the fruit of it is said, in the same scripture, to be 'pleasant to the sight and good for food,' as well as that of other trees which were ordained for the purpose. It is a vain thing to inquire what sort of fruit it was; and it is better to confess our ignorance, than to pretend to be wise above what is written.—Further, it is called the tree of life. Some suppose that the principal if not the only reason of its being so called, was that it was ordained to preserve man's natural life, or to prevent any decay of nature, or, if it were in the least impaired, to restore it to its former vigour. Accordingly, they suppose that, though man was made immortal, yet some things might have happened to him which would have had a tendency to impair his health, in some degree, and to weaken and destroy the temperament of his body, by which means death would gradually, according to the course of nature, be brought upon him; but that as a relief against this, he had a remedy always at hand, for the fruit of this tree, by a medicinal virtue, would restore him to his former state of health, as effectually as meat, drink, and rest have a natural virtue to repair the fatigues and supply the necessities of nature, in those who have the most healthful constitution, which would, notwithstanding, be destroyed, without the use of them. But, though there is somewhat of spirit and ingenuity in this supposition, why may we not suppose that the same effect might be produced by the use of any other food, which would be always ready at hand, whenever he had occasion for it, or wherever he resided? I cannot but conclude, therefore, that the principal, if not the only reason, of the tree of life being so called, was its being, by God's appointment, a sacramental sign and ordinance for the faith of our first parents, that, if they retained their integrity, they might be assured of the blessed event, namely, eternal life. Of this the tree of life was, as it is called in this Answer, a pledge. It expressed in substance the same idea as other sacraments; that is, it was designed not to confer the blessing promised, but to signify it, and also to encourage expectation of it. Our first parents were to eat of the fruit of this tree, agreeably to the nature of other sacramental signs, that hereby the thing signified might be brought to their remembrance. They might take occasion, at the same time, to rely on God's promise relating to the blessing which they expected; and they might be as much assured, that they should attain eternal life, in case they persisted in their obedience, as they were, that God had given them this tree, and liberty to eat of it, with the expectation of the blessing which it signified.

Now, to make it appear that it was designed as a sacramental sign of eternal life, which was promised in the covenant, we may consider those allusions to it in the New Testament, whereby the heavenly glory is set forth. It is said, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'<sup>e</sup> Again, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.'<sup>f</sup> It seems very plain, that the tree of life, in these scriptures, respects the heavenly glory, which is called the 'New Jerusalem,' for the passages have a particular reference to that state of the church, 'when God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither



sorrow, nor crying.<sup>g</sup> Moreover, mention is immediately afterwards made of 'Christ's coming quickly, and his reward being with him.'<sup>h</sup> There are also several other passages, which might be easily observed, which agree only with the heavenly state. Now, since the heavenly glory is thus described, why may we not suppose, that the heavenly state was signified by this tree to Adam, in paradise? That this may farther appear, let it be considered, that nothing is more common, in scripture, than for the Holy Ghost to represent the thing signified by the sign. Thus sanctification, which was one thing signified by circumcision, is called, 'The circumcision made without hands';<sup>i</sup> and regeneration, which is signified by baptism, is called, our 'being born of water';<sup>k</sup> and Christ, whose death was signified by the passover, is called, 'Our Passover.'<sup>l</sup> Many other instances, of a similar nature, might be produced. Now, since the heavenly glory is represented by the tree of life, why may we not suppose that the reason of its being so called was that it was ordained at first to be a sacramental sign or pledge of eternal life, which our first parents were given to expect, according to the tenor of that covenant which they were under. [See Note 3 E, p. 390.]

It is objected by some, that sacramental signs, ceremonies, or types, were adapted only to that dispensation which the church of the Jews were under, and therefore were not agreeable to that state in which man was at first. But though the ceremonial law was not known or instituted while man was in a state of innocence, and though it was not God's ordinary way to instruct him then by signs; yet it was not inconsistent with that state for God to ordain one or two signs as ordinances for the faith of our first parents, the signification of which was adapted to the state in which they were,—any more than our Saviour's instituting two significant ordinances under the gospel, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper, as having relation to the blessings expected therein, is inconsistent with the present dispensation, in which we have no more to do with the ceremonial law, than our first parents had. All this implies nothing more, than that God may, in any state of the church, instruct his people in those things which their faith should be conversant about, in what way he pleases.

It is farther objected, that the tree of life was not designed to be a sacramental sign of the covenant which our first parents were under, but rather, as was before observed, an expedient to render them immortal, in a natural way, inasmuch as when man was fallen, the tree of life had still the same virtue. Accordingly, it is said, 'Lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth out of the garden of Eden. And he drove out the man; and placed cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.'<sup>m</sup> Some extend this objection so far as to suppose that man did not eat of the tree of life before he fell; that if he had done so, he would, by virtue of his eating of it, have lived for ever, notwithstanding his sin; and that if, as soon as he had fallen, he had had that happy thought, and so had eaten of it, he might even then have prevented death. They hence allege that God drove him out of paradise, that he might not eat of it, that so the curse, consequent upon his fall, might take effect. The absurdity of this objection, and the method of reasoning made use of to support it, will appear, if we consider that there was something more lost by man's fall than immortality, and something which no fruit, produced by any tree, could restore to him. Besides, man was then liable to the curse which was denounced, by which he was under an indispensable necessity of returning to the dust whence he was taken. The tree of life, therefore, could not make this threatening of no effect, though man had eaten of it after his fall. But as the whole force of the objection depends on the sense which the objectors put on the text relating to man's expulsion from paradise and exclusion from the tree of life, the only reply which we need give to it is to consider what is the true and proper sense of that text. Now when it is said, 'God drove out the man, lest he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever,' the meaning is as if it had been said, 'Lest the poor deceived creature, who is now become blind, ignorant,

and exposed to error, should eat of this tree, and think to live for ever, as he did before the fall, he shall be driven out of paradise.' This was, in some respect, an act of kindness to him, to prevent a mistake which might have been of pernicious tendency, in turning him aside from seeking salvation in the promised seed. Besides, when the thing signified by this tree was not to be obtained in the way in which it was before, it ceased to be a sacramental sign; and hence, as he had no right to it, it would have been no less than a profanation to make a religious use of it in his fallen state.

The other tree, which we read of, whereof our first parents were forbidden to eat, upon pain of death, is called, 'The tree of knowledge of good and evil.' Though the fruit of this tree was, in itself, proper for food, as well as that of any other, yet God, out of his mere sovereignty, forbade man to eat of it. Hereby, also, he let him know, that he enjoyed nothing but by his grant, and that he must abstain from things apparently good, when he required him to do so. It is vain to pretend to determine what sort of fruit this tree produced. It is, indeed, a commonly received opinion, that it was an apple-tree, or some species of it. But, though I will not determine this to be a vulgar error, I cannot but think it a groundless conjecture.<sup>n</sup> I would rather profess my ignorance as to this matter.

As to the reason of its being called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, some have given great scope to their wit and fancy, in advancing groundless conjectures. The Jewish historian,<sup>o</sup> and, after him, several Rabbinical writers, have supposed, that it was thus described, because there was an internal virtue in the fruit of it to brighten the minds of men, and, in a natural way, make them wise. Socinus and some of his brethren have so far improved upon this absurd supposition, that they have supposed that our first parents, before they eat of this tree, had not much more knowledge than infants have. This notion they found on the literal sense they give of that scripture which represents them as not knowing that they were naked.<sup>p</sup> But enough of these absurdities, which carry in them their own confutation. I cannot but think that it is called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to signify, that, as man before knew by experience what it was to enjoy that good which God had conferred upon him, the consequence of his eating of it would be, his having an experimental knowledge of evil.

All that I shall add, concerning the prohibition which God gave to our first parents, is, that, as to the matter of it, it was one of those laws which are founded in God's arbitrary will, and that therefore the thing was rendered sinful, only by its being forbidden. Man's disobedience to it, however, rendered him no less guilty, than if he had transgressed any of the laws of nature. Moreover, it was a very small thing for him to have yielded obedience to this law, which was designed as a trial of his readiness to perform universal obedience. It was not so difficult a duty as that which God afterwards commanded Abraham to perform, when he bade him offer up his son. Nor was Adam under a necessity of eating of the fruit, since he had such a liberal provision of all things for his sustenance and delight. His sin, in not complying with the prohibition, was, in consequence, the more aggra-

<sup>n</sup> The principal argument brought to prove this, is the application to it of that scripture, in Cant. viii. 5, 'I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth;' which is understood to mean that the church, when fallen by our first parents' eating the fruit of this tree, was raised up, when the Messiah was first promised. But though this is a truth, yet whether it be the thing intended by the Holy Ghost, in that scripture, is uncertain. As for the opinion of those who suppose it was a fig-tree, as Theodoret [Vid. Quest. xxviii. in Gen.], and some other ancient writers, it has no other foundation, but what we read, concerning our first parents sewing fig-leaves together, and making themselves aprons, which, they suppose, was done before they departed from the tree, their shame immediately suggesting the necessity of the step they took. Others think, that whatever tree it was, it certainly was not a fig-tree, because it can hardly be supposed but that our first parents, having a sense of guilt, as well as shame, would be afraid so much as to touch that tree which had occasioned their ruin. Others conclude, that it was a vine, because our Saviour appointed that wine, which the vine produces, should be used, in commemorating his death, which removed the effects of that curse which sin brought on the world. But this is a vain and trifling method of reasoning, and discovers what lengths some men run, in their absurd glosses on scripture.

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Joseph. Antiquit. lib. i. cap. 2. Smacl. de Ver. et Nat. D. cii.

<sup>p</sup> Vid. Socin. de. Stat. Prim. Hom. et



vated. Besides, he was expressly cautioned against eating, and told, that 'in the day that he eat of it, he should die.' By this caution, God, foreseeing that he would disobey the command, determined to leave him without excuse. This was that transgression by which he fell, and brought on the world all the miseries that have ensued.

[Note 3 D. *The Covenant of Works*.—Dr. Ridgeley, like most orthodox writers, applies to the constitution of things under which Adam was placed, the name of covenant, and even contends that, in order to our maintaining the doctrine of original sin, this name must be understood of it in a strict or proper sense. He evidently neither intended nor saw, that, from identifying the idea of a covenant with the constitution established over Adam, multitudes would draw inferences most erroneous and detrimental respecting the nature and basis of the covenant of grace. When, in a subsequent part of his work, he treats of this covenant, he perceives necessity anxiously and closely to caution men against the notion of any divine covenant with man, consisting of what he terms 'stipulation and restipulation.' He there uses great care also to warn his readers against supposing that, in the covenant of grace as made with the redeemed, there either is or can be, on their part, the performance of any condition. Now, had he been equally cautious when about to discuss the nature of the constitution established over Adam, he would have paused before he applied to it the name covenant. One important fact would have readily occurred to him, that it is not once called by that name in scripture; and this fact would probably have suggested the inquiry, whether the inspired usage of the word in cases where it is employed be such as to warrant its application to the Adamic Constitution. The expositions which orthodox writers give of what they term 'the Covenant of Life,' or, 'the Covenant of Works,' are generally just such, it is true, as harmonize with the scripture accounts of the constitution established over Adam; but exactly in the proportion of their being so, they render the word 'covenant,' as applied to that constitution, a misnomer, and, at the same time, give rise to confusedness or inaccuracy of idea in contemplating those transactions which the word properly designates.

A covenant, according to the scriptural use of the word, as employed to designate what God establishes with man, is a constitution, an economy, or a system of promise, established or confirmed by sacrifice. The radical idea included in it, appears to be a promise, actual or prospective, exhibited in moral ordinances, and secured and vindicated by atonement. *The Covenant*, by way of eminence, is simply the plan of salvation, consisting in the promise of pardon, of renovating influence and divine favour, through the expiatory work of Immanuel. This is what the scriptures designate the covenant in all the instances in which they represent it as made with the redeemed, or with Christ as their public head. See, in particular, Heb. viii. 10—12. All other divine covenants are simply so many editions of this; or they consist of the same promise, in connection with the same sacrifice, but exhibited in distinct or peculiar moral ordinances. The Most High appears to have established his covenant with Adam immediately after the fall. Both his words to Noah, when establishing his covenant with him, and the slaughter of animals previous to the time when permission was given to use their flesh for food, prove that the communication made to fallen man, the communication under the warrant of which Abel believed and sacrificed, and 'Enoch walked with God,' was a covenant, a promise of salvation, through a Saviour to come, exhibited in a sacrificial institution which prefigured the Saviour's expiatory work. The covenants with Noah, with Abraham, with the Israelites at Sinai, were all of the same character. All, in some form or other, substantially consisted in the 'promise of eternal life, which God promised in Christ before the world began,' or in a renewal, repetition, or special promulgation of that promise, in connection with such sacrificial performances or enactments as showed that the promise should be vindicated and made sure by the atoning death of the Redeemer.

I should occupy too much space were I to prove by detailed argument that the view I have stated of the divine covenants is correct. Paul's reasoning in Gal. iii. 15—18, proceeds on the principle that God's covenant and his promise are the same thing; and it even uses the two words interchangeably, or as expressive of the same idea. His reasoning, or rather his direct assertion, in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, proves also that 'a covenant,' there most improperly translated 'a testament,' is of force only over dead victims, or is, in every case, vindicated and ratified by sacrifice. Though many promises were made to Abraham during the earlier period succeeding his call, no divine communication to him is called a covenant till a promise was made in connection with a special sacrificial offering. Abraham, by divine direction, slew certain victims, and 'divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another;' he then fell into a deep sleep, and, on awaking, beheld 'a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp,' the symbols of the divine presence and glory, passing between the pieces. He himself took no part in the transaction of making the covenant; he expressed no assent to proposed or optional terms, and did not pass between the divided pieces of the victims; he only received a gracious or sovereign promise from God, and, under divine instruction, recognised it to be of a character which should be vindicated and ratified by sacrifice.

A divine covenant or covenants have thus reference to man as a fallen and sinful being; and point to his restoration from guilt and pollution, through the mediatorial work of Christ. Accordingly, the root whence the word ברית, covenant, is derived, signifies to purify; the word covenant itself, literally means a purification, or a purification sacrifice; and the phrase, for making a covenant, means, to cut a purification sacrifice, or cut off a purifying victim. Throughout the scriptures, therefore, the one pervading idea of the divine covenant or covenants, amidst all the variety of phraseology and of reference which occurs, is just the great concentrating idea of the

gospel,—the promise of salvation through the sacrifice of the Redeemer,—the offer and assurance of redemption through his blood ‘shed for remission of sins unto many.’

As exhibited in the typical ordinance instituted with Abraham, the promise of salvation is called ‘the covenant of circumcision,’ Acts vii. 8. Rom. iv. 11, compared with Gen. xvii. 13, 14; as exhibited in the ceremonial ordinances instituted at Sinai, it is called ‘the old covenant,’ or ‘the covenant made with Israel;’ and as exhibited in the simple and permanent ordinances of the Christian dispensation, it is called ‘the new, the well-ordered, the everlasting covenant.’ By a very obvious metonymy, the name Covenant is occasionally applied to the ordinances which exhibited it, or to the documents in which it is recorded. Accordingly, the entire ceremonial law, the Sabbath institution, the two tables of the decalogue, as deposited beneath the mercy-seat, the books of Moses, and the entire body of the scriptures, are all, more or less directly, termed covenants. All were exhibitions, either in themselves or in the connection they held with prefigurative or other institutions, of life and deliverance to man through the blood of Christ, and the dispensation of the Spirit. Hence, while they are occasionally mentioned in a metonymical way as covenants, they are in general described by appropriate literal epithets, and in one or two instances are designated not as covenants themselves, but as ordinances in which the covenant is exhibited. Circumcision is termed ‘a sign and seal of faith,’ and the scriptures or the writings of Moses, are termed ‘the book of the covenant,’ Exod. xxvii. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 2; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30. The very metonymical use of the word, is evidence, therefore, that a divine covenant is, as we have repeatedly stated, the promise of salvation vindicated and ratified by sacrifice.

Human covenants mentioned in scripture, as all human covenants necessarily must be, are essentially different, in nature and object, and almost all properties, from the divine covenant. When men observed that God’s special promise, as announced to an individual or community, was confirmed by sacrifice, they naturally inferred that the solemn slaying of a victim was the highest ratification which could be afforded of a promise between man and man. Every promise in particular, and even every mutual stipulation or transaction of whatever sort, which received this ratification, they would term a covenant. The word, as applied to any engagement between man and man, almost necessarily assumed the sense of a ratified or solemn agreement; and eventually it bore, in this application of it, no other meaning, and denoted simply such agreement whether confirmed by sacrifice or not. Dr. Ridgeley himself, however, when he afterwards treats of the covenant of grace, ably and carefully shows, that all ideas of a human covenant are to be scared away from the mind, and not suffered in any degree to intrude, when we contemplate a covenant made by the Most High. Interpret the constitution of things established over Adam at his creation as we may, we must not apply to it any of the notions of a covenant between man and man. In inquiring whether it possessed in any sense the nature of a covenant, we must be guided solely by the scriptural uses of the word when employed to designate what is strictly divine.

Now, there are two facts, which seem fatal to the notion that the Adamic constitution was of the nature of a covenant. The first is, that it is not once called a covenant in scripture; and the second is, that it was, in all respects, unconnected with sacrifice. In some cases, as in that of the doctrine of the Trinity, the absence of a word does not by any means infer the absence of the idea which it is used to designate. But, in all such cases, the word does not occur in scripture in any sense: it is absolutely wanting. To supply an appropriate word whereby a peculiar doctrine of scripture may be expressed in a single term, is one thing; and to take a word of very frequent occurrence, and apply it to something different from any of the matters to which scripture applies it, is another. The former may be perfectly warrantable; while the latter can hardly fail to be wrong. The word ‘covenant’ is not of rare or obscure occurrence, but is used freely and very often. The Adamic constitution, too, is mentioned not merely in a general way which might comport with latitude of phraseology, but in a peculiar and specific manner, as the basis of at least two closely compacted arguments (See Rom. chap. v.; 1 Cor. chap. iv.) requiring the utmost nicety of phrase and exactitude of definition. Yet out of about two hundred and forty times that the word covenant occurs, it is not once, either directly or indirectly, employed to designate the Adamic constitution. The advocates of the supposed covenant of works, feel that this fact presses hard on their theory; else they would scarcely make an attempt to find a solitary instance in the passage in Hosea, ‘They, like men, have transgressed the covenant.’ Dr. Ridgeley shows, that the phrase, ‘like men,’ is rightly translated, and ought not to be, ‘like Adam;’ and he judiciously declines to base on it any argument in support of his views. The whole passage bears internal evidence that our translation is correct. ‘The people whom the prophet describes ‘transgressed the covenant;’ they broke away from that dispensation of the divine promise which was established with their fathers at Sinai; they forsook the ordinances of the God of Israel, and fell a-lusting after idols; and they thus acted ‘like men,’ under the influence of the depravity of heart, and the enmity against God which had drawn the nations into heathenism, and which had often incited God’s own peculiar people to apostasy and revolt. Can any ideas be more distant than these are from allusion to either the nature or the demolition of the Adamic constitution? Yet the passage which appears to contain them, is the only one from which an attempt is made to obtain scriptural sanction for calling that constitution a covenant!

The other fact to which I alluded is peculiarly decisive,—that the Adamic constitution was, in all respects, unconnected with sacrifice. Man was in a state of innocence; he was a stranger to even the knowledge of evil; he could have no idea, and he had no need, of redemption or atonement; he could think of a divine promise only as a simple communication of the divine mind, and could form no conception of it as either vindicated or made sure by a work of atonement. The very elementary ideas of a divine covenant, according to the scriptural and the only legitimate usage of the term, were foreign to his condition and to all his modes of thinking. Even apart, however, from these considerations, the simple fact that the Adamic constitution had no manner of connexion with sacrifice, is conclusive that it was not, in the scriptural sense of the word, a covenant.



Dr. Ridgeley admits, or rather states, that to claim the name of covenant for it is desirable on account only of the consequences which have been drawn from its being termed a law. He says, 'We would not contend about the use of a word, if many did not design, by what they say concerning its being a law and not properly a covenant, to pave the way for the denial of the imputation of Adam's sin, or did not, at the same time, consider him as no other than the natural head of his posterity.' But he was not warranted to give us the alternative of using the word law, or the word covenant. The truth lies between the extremes which these words designate. To say that the Adamic constitution was simply a law, is manifestly wrong; but to say that it was a covenant is not, on that account, right. Its grand peculiarity was its representative character. It was not merely an enactment, as a law is, for a multitude of individuals *singulatin*, but was also and peculiarly an enactment for a whole race in the person of their first parent as their legal public head. This, and this only, is the feature of the Adamic constitution which is specified in the definitions and descriptions of it in the writings of the New Testament: this, and this only, is the feature of it in which even Dr. Ridgeley himself, in his discussion under a subsequent Answer, sees its connexion with the doctrine of original sin. Why then should he say, that the withholding from it of the title 'covenant,' 'paves the way for the denial of the imputation of Adam's guilt?' The idea of representation, and the idea of a covenant, are widely apart. On the principle of representation, the whole doctrine of original sin is clear and consecutive; while, on the principle of a covenant, it looms confusedly before the mind, and fails to come distinctly into view, it indeed it comes into view at all, till seen in the light of the principle of representation. Adam was the public head of his posterity, Christ is the public head of the redeemed; the effects of Adam's disobedience come on all his offspring, the effects of Christ's obedience come on all his chosen people. But here the parallel between the first and the second Adam ends. All the rest of our Redeemer's work—all of it which is peculiarly connected with the idea of the divine covenant—has reference to the vindicating and ratifying of the promise of eternal life, the manifesting of the divine holiness and glory in the saving of sinners, by the great work of expiation.

Dr. Ridgeley, with the view of proving his doctrine, gives an illustrative argument which not only fails to show that the Adamic constitution was a covenant, but also tends fearfully to misrepresent the covenant of salvation. 'If,' says he, 'a king had promised a subject, as an act of favour, that he would confer honours upon him, on condition of his yielding obedience, in some particular instances, then he (the subject) would have a right to them,—not as yielding obedience to a law, but as fulfilling the conditions of a covenant.' Now, though sovereign promise, or promise as an act of favour, is one element in the idea of a covenant, it is not the only one, nor even the chief. A promise, as constituting a divine covenant, is vindicated—it is exhibited in harmony with truth and holiness—by connexion with sacrifice. God's promise to save men,—his covenant that he will put his laws into their minds,—that he will be their God, and they his people,—that all shall know him from the least to the greatest,—and that their sins and their iniquities he will remember no more,—is illustrated as to its moral glory, and made righteous and sure in its fulfilment, by the expiatory work of Immanuel. A divine covenant with man supposes him to be in a condition to be benefited by sovereign goodness, not simply as such, but as displayed in a way of sacrificial ratification. But very different from this was the condition of Adam. The divine promise to him, like his existence itself, sprang from sovereign bounty, but had no connexion with a sacrificial work. Nor, again, are the state and character of men with whom God establishes his covenant of salvation, such as admit of their acquiring 'a right' to 'honours' by performing enjoined 'conditions.' Dr. Ridgeley himself, when treating of that covenant, uses care to show that, on man's part, there neither is nor can be acquired right,—that all the blessings of the covenant are gifts of the free love of God,—that they are bestowed simply because 'God is love,' or because, as displayed through the work of the Redeemer, he is 'the just God and the Saviour,'—'just, and the justifier of every one who believes in Jesus.' Dr. Ridgeley's illustrative argument, then, from the supposed case of a prince promising honours 'on condition of some particular instances of obedience,' comes short of proving that the Adamic constitution was a covenant, and, at the same time, tends to suggest momentous error respecting the nature of the covenant of salvation.

As to the case of Mephibosheth, which forms Dr. Ridgeley's only other direct argument, it was the result of a *human covenant*. Can any mistake be more palpable, than to institute a parallel between the sovereign enactment of Deity to Adam, and a mutual promise between David and Jonathan,—between man and man? Yet this mistake is just what constitutes Dr. Ridgeley's illustrative argument, and forms the basis on which he constructs his consequent inferences.

We come now to glance at the second of the topics into which he distributes his discussion,—the blessing promised to Adam in the event of obedience. Dr. Ridgeley views this blessing as 'superadded happiness,' confirmation in holiness, translation to heaven; and he treats it throughout as the pivot on which all his ideas and proofs of an Adam's covenant turn. In his direct arguments in favour of his doctrine, he takes this point for granted; he feels that the assumption of it is essential to the tenableness of his opinion; and he now attempts to find proof for it as the *sine qua non* of the supposed covenant of works.

His first argument is based on the original threat, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Surely he must see quite through an opaque body, who can discern here a promise of superadded happiness, of confirmation in holiness, of translation to heaven. Any man, be he who he may, who comes direct to the Bible, without calling at the academy of the schoolmen, or taking initiatory lessons from framers of theological theories and systems, could never, one should think, discover these ideas in the threatening. He might run hazard of not seeing in it more than a simple denunciation of death in the event of disobedience; and, after mature reflection, he should become able to see in it at best an implied promise, or a promise, negatively expressed, of a continuance of the blessings which man possessed, in the event of his continuing to obey. Whatever promise the threatening implies, is strictly negative; and cannot, without the most violent construction, be

made to include such positive blessings as lay beyond the range of Adam's experience or knowledge. Exactly the same form of expression occurs repeatedly in scripture; and, when it admits a negative or implied construction, it appears in every instance to involve a promise simply of the continuance of such life as the denounced party possessed. One instance may sufficiently serve for illustration. 'God said to Abimelech in a dream, Restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine,' Gen. xx. 6, 7. Here the threatening, in just the same words as that to Adam, stands accompanied with an express statement of the promise which it implies. Death is denounced in the event of disobedience; and life—the continuance of that which Abimelech possessed—is promised in the event of obedience. The circumstances of Adam and of Abimelech, it is true, were widely different. They acted, the one in his individual capacity; and the other as the representative of his posterity. The life possessed was, in the one case, the forfeited life of a mortal; and, in the other case, the uncondemned life of a holy creature. Still the language of the threats against both in the event of disobedience is the same, and requires to be understood according to an uniform law of interpretation. Hence, as the counterpart of the threat against Abimelech was, that he should continue to wear out the mortal life he possessed; so the counterpart of the threat against Adam was, that he should continue to enjoy the unforfeited paradisaic life with which he was blessed. Dr. Ridgeley truly remarks, that this sense of the text enervates the force of the argument to prove that man was under the covenant. Yet he offers no reasoning to avert it, and seems obliged to content himself with mere assertion. We wonder the more at his doing so, that the interpretation in question, not only 'enervates' the arguments for the supposed covenant of works, but absolutely demolishes them. If the blessing promised to Adam was the continuance of the life which he possessed, then it was exactly, in its basis and character, such a blessing as his existence itself, his creation, his endowment with moral powers, his possessing the image of his Creator, and his enjoying the boons of the paradisaic state. These were what constituted his life,—his life as it began, and his life as it was continued. Now, no one pretends that the bestowal of this life either was or could be the result of a covenant with Adam. To suppose that it was, is to say, that there was a result of the covenant before the covenant was made, and that Adam existed, and existed as partaker of the covenant, before he was created.

Dr. Ridgeley's next argument is a piece of reasoning unconnected with any appeal to scripture. He supposes Adam to have been conscious that he possessed capacity for a greater degree of blessedness than he enjoyed in paradise, and to have had a desire for this implanted in his very nature; and he infers that God 'who gave him the desire,' would, after a given period, gratify it, by conferring on him superadded happiness and confirmation in holiness. It might be enough simply to ask, Whence were these conceits obtained? in what part of the Bible is information respecting them to be found? But, while we deprecate and might summarily dismiss idle conjecture and assumption in general, we cannot but remark on the peculiar infelicity of supposing Adam to have had a less proportion of happiness than his capacity admitted. To say so is not only to contradict the necessary law between proportionate holiness and happiness, but also to impugn the beneficence of the Creator. A capacity for blessedness, accompanied by a craving for it, but continuing for a time unsatisfied, is a monstrous idea to be associated with the notion of paradisaic bliss,—or of the bliss of any holy creature. That Adam, indeed, had not the *degree* of happiness which a redeemed soul in heaven has, seems certain. He had not before him the brightest of all manifestations of the divine love and glory,—that manifestation into which 'angels desire to look,' whence seraphs draw their highest joy, and by which is 'made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God.' 'The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus'—the light of the divine character displayed in the surpassingly wonderful plan of redemption—did not beam on Adam's path. But though he had not the blessedness of beholding it,—and though, in other respects, he was less exalted, less glorious, than a ransomed soul who 'is one spirit with Christ,' whose life is 'bid with Christ in God,' and who is ever with Immanuel beholding his glory and bearing his likeness,—he unquestionably was happy to the utmost extent of his capacity. Degrees of blessedness, and incompleteness of blessedness, are matters essentially different. Just as two vessels may be equally full, the one of which contains an hundred times more than the other; so two sinless beings may be equally replete with happiness, one of whom has small and the other vast capacity. Wherever sin is absent, be the capacity of the soul what it may, the displays of the divine holiness and beneficence fill it with happiness to the brim. To assert the opposite is to impeach the character of Deity, and contradict the established laws of his moral government; and to be obliged to assert it in order to maintain the doctrine of a Covenant of Works, is strongly presumptive evidence that no such covenant existed.

Dr. Ridgeley further attempts to prove a conditional superadded happiness, confirmation in holiness and translation to heaven, from some texts of scripture which speak of the work of redemption as a work of recovery for man. He says, 'Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to procure the recovery of forfeited blessings; yet, what he came into the world to purchase was eternal life. This would have been enjoyed, therefore, if there had been no need of purchasing it, that is, if man had retained his integrity.' But where did Dr. Ridgeley learn that eternal life is purchased? 'This is eternal life, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' 'The gift of God is eternal life.' Christ purchased, not eternal life, but the people to whom God gives it. He came to seek and to save, not forfeited blessings, but lost or guilty souls. Where, besides, is the evidence that the life which he gives—the life which his expiatory work rendered it a righteous thing for God to bestow—is the same in nature, the same in identity, as that which was forfeited by Adam's transgression? The one was life in paradise, the other is life begun on earth and perpetuated in heaven; the one was life in direct communion with God, the other is life through a Mediator; the one was life in the representative keeping of a man



who was 'of the earth earthy,' the other is life in the representative keeping of the Lord from heaven; the one was life which, even on Dr. Ridgeley's theory, was liable for a season to be forfeited, the other is life so secure that from the moment of the bestowal of it, the divine public Head who sustains it says to all its possessors, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Had the work of redemption been, in Dr. Ridgeley's sense, a work of mere recovery, it would at best have placed the saved in just the condition in which Adam was when he fell. But, blessed be God, it does unutterably more. For 'not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification of life; for if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' Grace did more than undo the mischiefs of the fall,—achieved more than to recover to man what he had lost,—was more, far more, than commensurate with the evil which it assailed. For, 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.' What follows but that the eternal life in question is peculiarly a result of the work of redemption; that it differs, as to the amount and circumstances of the blessedness involved in it, from the life which was forfeited by Adam's transgression; and that, therefore, there is no correspondence between the promise of the one life and the promise of the other, or that the promise to Adam was not, like that of the redeemed, of the nature of a covenant?

Dr. Ridgeley adduces still another argument, based on Rom. viii. 3, 4. I confess myself utterly at a loss, however, to see its meaning. The text on which he founds it is generally understood by orthodox writers, and if I mistake not, is understood by himself, to mean, that fallen man, through his inability to obey, could not obtain salvation by works, or that the law could not achieve his well-being in consequence of the depravity of his nature; but that God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for a sin-offering, defeated the power of our depraved nature, and accomplished our deliverance. Now, what connexion this can be supposed to have with proving Adam to have been under a covenant, or to have had a promise of confirmation in holiness and translation to heaven, on condition of continuing for a period in obedience, is more than I can discover. The argument, if there be one, eludes perception, and, of course, must pass unanswered.

Dr. Ridgeley next proceeds to take lower ground. Supposing his arguments in favour of translation to heaven as the result of keeping the condition of the alleged covenant, not to be admitted, he says it will be sufficient for his purpose to show that Adam had a conditional promise of confirmation in holiness. A few sentences will suffice for examining his proofs. The first is, that the grace of confirmation was necessary to render Adam's happiness complete. Here he falls into the same mistake as before, of supposing that Adam had a blessedness inferior to his capacity of enjoyment, and an apprehension of losing even such as he had, which are utterly incompatible with the established connexion between proportionate happiness and holiness. Adam was a stranger to the knowledge of evil,—altogether a stranger to such fear or solicitude as does not comport with a state of entire blessedness. Dr. Ridgeley's assumption is based too much on a latent idea that man in paradise had the susceptibilities, and in a degree the liability to apprehension, of a being practically acquainted with evil. But even were the assumption unburdened with objectionable consequences, it is mere conjecture, and cannot be allowed to stand as argument. Dr. Ridgeley's next proof is still more gratuitous: it entirely rests on a mere assumption of the peculiarly conditional character of Adam's obedience,—an assumption which takes for granted, not only the point immediately in question, but the whole doctrine of the supposed covenant of works. His third proof is a duplicate of his first; and supposes Adam, but for the prospect of the grace of confirmation, to have been subject to an unhappy feeling of uncertainty utterly inconsistent with all just notions of the condition and experience of a sinless being. His fourth proof is again a begging of the question to be proved: it takes for granted that the constitution established over the angels, and the covenant of salvation established with believers, are based on the same principle, or stamped with the same character, as the constitution established over Adam. His last proof is the most unblushing of all his assumptions: it begs the question to be proved, in the very words in which that question is stated. The question is, Whether Adam's probation was a trial of continuance in the state in which he was created, or a trial of fitness for another and more glorious state? Now, says Dr. Ridgeley, by way of *proving* the latter side of the question, 'If he was a probationer, it *must have been* for the heavenly glory, or at least for a further degree of happiness, containing this grace of confirmation.' Such are his *reasonings* in support of his point—naked, unargued, unillustrated, empty assumption. Silence would have been less injurious to his cause. They just serve—and serve not a little cogently—to show that there is no proof for his doctrine,—not one piece even of presumptive evidence.

We need not follow Dr. Ridgeley in his statement and examination of objections against his doctrine. He deals chiefly, if not entirely, with those who regard the Adamic constitution as having been a law apart from representation, and who deny the imputation of Adam's guilt. His proper opportunity for confronting these antagonists would have been when he came to discuss the character of Adam as a public head. Under his present topic, his business was to have dealt with men who hold the doctrines of representation, of original sin, and generally of the Calvinistic system as tenaciously as himself; but who regard the theory of the Covenant of Works as an idle invention of philosophizing or scholastic divines, and an obscuration of the clearly simple exhibitions of divine truth in the Word of God. He has not, however, confronted this class of thinkers; and, in consequence, does not say anything which requires remark.

No part of the third division of Dr. Ridgeley's discussion—his examination of *the condition of the covenant*—calls for notice, except the concluding portion in which he treats of the duration or length of man's probationary period. This is altogether a deduction from the doctrine of a covenant with Adam, and supposes that doctrine to have been proved. We notice it merely to

point it out as an illustration of the inconveniences which attend a theorizing on divine truth. Having, as he supposes, found Adam under a covenant, Dr. Ridgeley is bound to inquire what the condition of the covenant was, how long it was to be fulfilled, when the terms of it would expire, how the reward of it would be bestowed, what the position of those whom Adam represented would have been when he himself ceased from his probation. But as to these and some other curious points, Dr. Ridgeley and the theologians who think as he does on the subject, are all at sea, without compass, and even without a guiding star. They have no guidance, not even a very distant suggestion from scripture; they are beyond the view of even analogy or any general principle of reason; and they plough their way through the waves of fancy, with idle conjecture for their steersman. Even apart from the question of a paradisaic covenant, theologians who speculate thus ought to reflect that all the events of Adam's history were foreseen and provided for exactly as they occurred; that, in the sure purposes of God, there was no contingency, and therefore no possibility of another state of things arising, than the establishing of an economy of mercy over our whole race as parties fallen in Adam, and 'shut up' for salvation to the faith of Christ; and they ought, in consequence, to see how very idle, how positively injurious, how fitted to convert the study of actual truth into imaginative reflection on things which never were and never could be, it is to institute inquiries and write discussions as to what would have been if Adam had not fallen. Let us be silent where the word of God is silent; and, when it lifts up its thousand voices to tell us of the wonderful and glorious things which God has wrought for us, let us yield up to its instructions our undivided attention, our entire mind, our absorbing desire to be taught of God the great things which it reveals.—ED.]

[NOTE 3 E. *The Design of the Tree of Life.*—To call the tree of life a sign, seems perfectly legitimate. A sign is simply a symbol, or a metaphorical or commemorative exhibition of some truth. That the tree of life possessed this character, appears certain. But to call it 'a sacramental sign,'—'a sign of eternal life,'—can, in our opinion, be correct only if we discard the notion of the Adamic constitution having been a covenant. After what was stated in the former Note, we need offer no additional reason for regarding the tree as having been simply a sign, that so long as Adam obeyed he should live,—that holiness and happiness are inseparably connected,—that a soul in a state of communion with God and subjection to his will, has free and constant access to every means and resource of spiritual life and enjoyment.

To call the tree of life 'the seal of the covenant,' appears, in my humble judgment, to use words in defiance of all meaning. Let any person reflect on what a divine covenant with man is, and then try whether he can imagine such a thing as a sealing of that covenant. Sealing has reference to attestation, and applies to a testamentary deed, and, in scripture, to a person. But neither in the ordinary nor in the scriptural acceptations of the word, does the notion of sealing accord, in any respect, with the idea of a divine covenant. As to 'a sealing ordinance,' or 'the sealing ordinance of a covenant,' a person unambitious to grapple with the phraseology of the schoolmen, will be very willing to confess himself unable to understand it. An ordinance, for the most part, is a symbolical or a commemorative sign of truth; but how it comes either to seal a covenant, or to seal the person over whom the covenant is established, is more than can be very easily perceived. Believers in Christ, or partakers in the covenant of salvation, are 'sealed with the *Holy Spirit of promise.*' Abraham received circumcision, indeed, as both a sign and a seal,—both a symbol of truth and an attestation from God; but then it was in itself, or in its own nature, a sign; and as a seal it attested neither the covenant established with him, nor his personal connexion with the covenant, but simply the genuineness of his faith. 'He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised.' This text, so far as I am aware, is the only one which has been construed to sanction the whole theory respecting 'the seals of covenants' and 'sealing ordinances;' yet it utters a meaning widely different from the complex one of that theory, and beautifully accordant with the simple, untechnical, unincumbered statements of truth in the Bible.—ED.]

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## THE FALL.

QUESTION XXI. *Did man continue in that estate wherein God, at first, created him?*

ANSWER. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and thereby fell from the state of innocency wherein they were created.

### *The Freedom of Man's Will.*

In this Answer there is something supposed, namely, that our first parents were endued with a freedom of will. This is a property belonging to man, as a reasonable creature. We may as well separate understanding from the mind, as liberty from the will; especially when it is conversant about things within its own sphere, and, most of all, when we consider man in a state of perfection as to all the powers and faculties of his soul, as he was before the fall. Now, that we may understand what this freedom of will was, let it be considered, that it consisted in a power,



which man had, of choosing or embracing what appeared, agreeably to the dictates of his understanding, to be good, or of refusing and avoiding what was evil,—and this without any constraint or force laid upon him, to act contrary to these dictates. It supposes also a power to act pursuant to what the will chooses; otherwise it could not secure the happiness which it desires, or avoid the evil which it detests, and then its liberty would be little more than a name. Moreover, since the thing which the will chooses is supposed to be agreeable to the dictates of the understanding, it follows, that if there be an error in judgment, or if a destructive or an unlawful object present itself, under the notion of good, while it is really evil, the will is said to act freely, in choosing or embracing it. Accordingly, it is free to evil as well as to good.

To apply this to our present purpose, we must suppose that man, in his state of innocency, was without any defect in his understanding, and that, in consequence, he could not, when making a right use of the powers and faculties of his soul, call evil good, or good evil. Yet through inadvertency, his mind might be imposed on; and that which was evil might be represented under the appearance of good, and accordingly the will determine itself to choose or embrace it. This is not inconsistent with liberty; for as the result might have been avoided by the right improvement of his natural powers, he was not constrained or forced to sin.

Now, that our first parents had this freedom of will, or power to retain their integrity, appears from their being under an indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience, and liable to punishment for the least defect in it. This supposes the thing not to have been in itself impossible, or the punishment ensuing unavoidable. It follows, therefore, that they had a power to stand, or, which is the same thing, a liberty of will to choose that which was conducive to their happiness. This might be argued also from the difference that there is between man's innocent and his fallen state. Nothing is more evident than that man, as fallen, is by a necessity of nature inclined to sin. Accordingly, he is styled, 'a servant of sin,'<sup>a</sup> or a slave to it, entirely under its dominion. But it was otherwise with him before his fall; when, according to the constitution of his nature, he was equally inclined to what is good, and furnished with every thing which was necessary to his yielding that obedience which was demanded of him.

#### *Man Left to the Freedom of his Will.*

It is farther observed, that our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will. This implies, that God did not design, especially while they were in the state of probation, to afford them, by the interposition of his providence, that immediate help which would have effectually prevented their compliance with any temptation to sin. That would have rendered their fall impossible, and would have been a granting them the blessing of confirmation, before the condition of their receiving it was fulfilled. God could easily have prevented the devil's entrance into paradise; as he does his coming again into heaven, to give disturbance to, or lay snares for, any of its inhabitants; or, though he suffered him to assault our first parents, he might, by the interposition of his grace, have prevented that inadvertency by which they gave the first occasion to his victory over them. There was no need for God to implant a new principle of grace in their souls; for, by the right use of the liberty of their own wills, they might have defended themselves against the temptation; and had he, at the time when there was most need of it, given them a present intimation of their danger, or especially excited those habits of grace which were implanted in their souls, their sinful compliance with Satan's temptation would have been prevented. But this God was not obliged to do; and accordingly he is said to have left them to the freedom of their own wills. This did not render him the author of their sin, or bring them under a natural necessity of falling; inasmuch as he had before furnished them with sufficiency of strength to stand. Man was not like an infant, or a person enfeebled by some bodily distemper, who has no ability to support himself, and, if not upheld by another, must

necessarily fall. He was like a strong man, who, by taking heed to his steps, may prevent his falling, without the assistance of others. He had no propensity in nature to sin, in consequence of which he stood in need of preventing grace; and God, in thus leaving him to himself, dealt with him in a way agreeable to the condition in which he was. He did not force or incline him to sin; but left him to the mutability of his own will, according to the tenor of the dispensation which he was under.

### *The Temptation.*

It is farther observed, that there was an assault made on our first parents by Satan, not by violence, but by temptation; the consequence of which was, that, by sinful compliance, they fell from their state of innocency. It appears very evident from scripture, that they were deceived or beguiled. Eve says, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.'<sup>r</sup> The apostle Paul says, to the same effect, 'The woman being deceived, was in the transgression.'<sup>s</sup> Here, though it is said, in the foregoing words, that 'Adam was not deceived,' probably nothing more is intended than that the man was not first deceived, or that he was deceived, not immediately by the serpent, but by his wife. Some, indeed, give another turn to the expression, and suppose that Adam sinned knowingly, being content to plunge himself into the depths of misery, in complaisance to Eve, that she might have a partner with her in her sorrows.<sup>t</sup> We think, however, that the apostle does not speak of Adam's not being deceived, but rather of his not being first deceived, or first in the transgression.

Now this deception, or temptation, was from the devil, who, because of his subtilty, is called, 'That old serpent.'<sup>u</sup> He is also said to make use of 'wiles,'<sup>x</sup> that is, various methods of deceit in so suiting his temptations that men may be ensnared by them. This leads us to consider the methods he took to deceive our first parents. We have a particular account of these, and of their compliance with them, in Gen. iii. 1—6. Here we shall take occasion to observe who the tempter was, and the way and manner in which he assaulted them.

There are, on the former of these subjects, two extremes of opinion, which some run into, and which are both to be avoided. Some suppose that the tempter was a beast, or natural serpent, and that the devil had no hand in the temptation; while others suppose that there was no serpent made use of, but that the devil did all without it, and that he is styled a serpent from his subtilty. These we call extremes of opinion; and the truth lies in a medium between them. We must suppose, therefore, that there was really a natural serpent, a beast so called, made use of as an instrument by the devil, by which he managed the temptation, and, accordingly, that he possessed and spake by it. This is the most common opinion, and agrees best with the account given in scripture; and it is also consistent with what our Saviour says of him, that 'he was a murderer from the beginning.'<sup>y</sup> That it was not only, or principally, the natural serpent that tempted our first parents, will appear, if we consider that, though the serpent is said to be more subtle than all the beasts of the field, it never was endowed with speech.<sup>z</sup> It hence could not, unless actuated by a spirit, hold a discourse with Eve, as the serpent in question is said to have done.—Again, brute creatures cannot reason or argue, as the serpent did. Whatever appearance of reason there may be in them, it would be very hard to prove that they are capable of digesting their ideas into a chain of reason-

<sup>r</sup> Gen. iii. 13.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 14.

<sup>t</sup> This is beautifully described by Milton, [in his *Paradise Lost*, Book 1X.] and many others have asserted the same thing for substance, as thinking it below the wisdom of the man to be imposed on, thereby insinuating, though without sufficient ground, that he had a greater degree of wisdom allotted to him than his wife.

<sup>u</sup> Rev. xii. 9 Chap. xx. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Eph. vi. 11.

<sup>y</sup> John viii. 44.

<sup>z</sup> Josephus, indeed, [See *Antiq. lib. i. cap. 2.*] intimates, that the serpent was, at first, endowed with speech, and that his loss of it was inflicted for his tempting man; but this is a groundless conjecture, arising from a supposition, that those things spoken of in Gen. iii. which are attributed to the devil, were done without him, which is not only his opinion, but that of many other Jewish writers, and several modern ones.



ing, or of inferring consequences from premises, as the serpent did. Much less are creatures which know nothing of God or the nature of moral good or evil, capable of reasoning about divine subjects, as the serpent that tempted Eve must be supposed to have done.—Though, however, the serpent was not the principal agent in the temptation, yet it was made use of by the devil. The history which we have of the temptation in the Book of Genesis, is not an allegorical account of what Satan did, as some suppose, without any regard to the part that the serpent bore. This appears from the curse denounced against the serpent: ‘Because thou hast done this,’ saith God, ‘thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.’<sup>a</sup> This is applicable only to the beast so called; and we see it evidently fulfilled at this day. Some, not, I think, without reason, infer hence that the serpent, before this, went erect; whereas afterwards, as the visible mark of the curse, it is said to go on its belly. This part of the curse, therefore, respected the natural serpent only. That, however, which is stated in the following words, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,’<sup>b</sup> respects the devil, that actuated, or spake by it. I am not insensible, indeed, that some Jewish writers, and others who would exempt the devil from having had any hand in the temptation, and who throw all the blame on the brute creature, the natural serpent, give a very jejune and empty sense of this text; understanding it altogether according to the letter, as importing that there should be a war between man and the serpent in order that man might be revenged on him, and that this war should never cease till he had slain him or had bruised his head. But it seems very plain, that as the former verse respects the instrument made use of, namely, the natural serpent, so this respects the devil, and contains a prediction that his malice should be defeated, and his power destroyed, by our Saviour, who is here promised, and described as ‘the seed of the woman.’ We are bound to conclude, therefore, that the devil, making use of the serpent, was the tempter, by whom our first parents were seduced and led astray from God to the ruin of themselves and all their posterity.

There are several things which may be observed in the method Satan took in managing the temptation by which he seduced and overcame our first parents. Of these we have an account in the scripture before-mentioned.—First, he concealed his character as a fallen spirit, and pretended that he was in circumstances not unlike those in which our first parents were. He seemed at least to pay a deference to the great God, so far as to allow that he had a right to give laws to his creatures. It is more than probable, also, that the event occurred immediately after his fall, and that our first parents knew nothing of a rebellion in heaven, and did not, in the least, suppose that there were any creatures who were enemies to God, or were using endeavours to render them so. Had the devil given Eve an historical narration of his sin and fall, and begun his temptation with open blasphemy or reproach cast on God, whom he had rebelled against, he could not but have apprehended that our first parents would treat him with the utmost abhorrence, and flee from him as an open enemy. But he conceals his enmity to God, while he pretends friendship to them. This was an instance of great subtilty; inasmuch as an enemy is never more formidable than when he puts on a specious pretence of religion, or conceals his vile character as an enemy to God, and, at the same time, pretends a great deal of friendship to those whom he designs to ruin.

Again, as he tempted our first parents soon after his own fall, which shows his restless malice against God and goodness, so he did so not long after their creation. In selecting this period he showed his subtilty, because, as some suppose, he was apprehensive that the longer man stood, the more his habits of grace would be strengthened, and so it would be more difficult for the temptation to take effect. But that which seems to have been the principal reason, was, either that he was apprehensive that man might soon have an intimation given him that there were some fallen spirits laying snares for his ruin, and that, in consequence, he would become more guarded against him; or that he did not know but that man might

soon be confirmed in his state of holiness and happiness. How long God would continue man in a state of probation, was not revealed; and the devil knew very well, that, upon his obtaining the grace of confirmation, after he had yielded obedience for a time, all his temptations would prove ineffectual. He hence applied himself to his work with the greatest expedition.

Further, he assaulted Eve when she was alone. This, indeed, is not expressly mentioned in scripture. It seems, however, to be very probable; inasmuch as he directed his discourse to and held a conference with her, and not with Adam, which, doubtless, he would have done, had he been present. In that case, too, it could hardly be said, as the apostle does in the scripture formerly quoted, that the woman was 'first in the transgression,' and that she was first deceived by the serpent. Indeed, had Adam been with her, though she might have been first in eating the forbidden fruit, he would have sinned as being a partaker with her, by suffering her to comply with the temptation, and not warning her of her danger, or endeavouring to detect the devil's sophistry, and to restrain her from compliance. As the law deems all to be principals in traitorous conspiracies against a prince, who are present and do not use the proper means which they ought to prevent them; so if Adam had been with Eve, he would have sinned with her, before he received the forbidden fruit from her hand. This, however, we do not find him charged with. We hence infer that she was alone, and that, on account of her being so, the devil took her at the greatest disadvantage. As the wise man well observes, 'Two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth.'<sup>c</sup>

Further, the instrument Satan made use of, was, as formerly observed, the serpent. Probably he was not suffered to take a human shape. Or if he had, it would, perhaps, not so well have answered his end; since it would have tended to amuse and surprise our first parents, and have put them upon inquiries who he was, and whence he came, for they knew that there were no human creatures formed but themselves. If he had made use of an inanimate creature, it would have been more surprising to hear it speak and reason about the providence of God. If, again, he had not assumed any visible shape, he could not have managed the temptation with success, for there was no corrupt nature in our first parents to work upon, as there is in us. Hence some conclude, that no temptation can, in an internal way, be offered to an innocent creature by the devil; that, therefore, it must have been presented to the senses of our first parents; and that hence it was necessary for him to assume some shape, particularly that of some brute creature, in order that he might more effectually carry on his temptation. It was also expedient to answer his design, that he should not make use of any brute creature which is naturally more stupid, and therefore less fit for his purpose. Accordingly he made use of the serpent, concerning which it is observed, that it is 'more subtle than any beast of the field.' Some suppose, too, that it was, at first, a very beautiful creature, however odious it is to mankind at present; and that it had a bright shining skin curiously painted with variety of colours, which, when the sun shone upon it, cast a bright reflection of all the colours of the rainbow. But we pass this by, as what is uncertain.

Again, it is probable that the devil took his opportunity to discourse with Eve about the tree of knowledge, when she was standing by it, or at least not far from it; that so he might prevail with her to comply with the temptation in haste. Had he given her room for too much deliberation, it might have prevented his design from taking effect; and if she had been at some distance from the tree, she would have had time to consider what she was going about. She did not want understanding to detect the fallacy, had she duly weighed matters, and therefore would hardly have complied with the temptation. That she was, at least, within sight of the tree, appears from the fact, that the serpent takes occasion, from the beholding of it, to discourse about it, and commend it. While he was speaking about it to her, 'she saw that it was pleasant to the eye, and good for food.'

As to the matter of the temptation, we may observe that the devil did not imme-



diately tempt her to blaspheme God, to proclaim open war against him, or to break one of the commandments of the moral law. What he tempted her to do, was to violate a positive law. This indeed was heinous in its own nature; as it was a practical disowning or denying of the sovereignty of God, and had many other aggravations attending it. Yet the breach of positive laws, founded on God's arbitrary will, are generally reckoned less aggravated than the breach of moral laws; and we are inclined to entertain temptation to them with less abhorrence, than when we are tempted to break one of the moral laws, which are founded in the nature of God. Had he tempted her to deny that there was a God, or that there was any worship due to him, or to murder her husband, or to commit any other crime which is in itself shocking to human nature, he would have had less ground to conclude that his temptation would have taken effect.

Here we may observe, that he proceeded, in a gradual way, from less to greater insinuations, brought against God. He does not immediately and directly, in his first onset, bring a charge against God or his providence, but pretends ignorance, and speaks as one who wished information. He says, 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?' as if he had said, 'Here is a garden well stored with fruit, the trees of which are designed for your food; are there any which you are prohibited from eating of?' This question occasions her reply, 'The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it; neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' Some think, that her sin began here, and that she misrepresents the divine prohibition. She was not forbid to touch it; it is said only, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'<sup>d</sup> But I cannot see that this was any other than a just inference from the prohibition itself; as every thing is to be avoided which may prove an occasion of sin, as truly as the sin itself. Others suppose that there is a degree of unbelief indicated by the expression, 'Lest ye die.'<sup>e</sup> This may be rendered, 'Lest peradventure ye die;' and it is thought to imply that it was possible for God to dispense with his threatening, and that, therefore, death would not certainly ensue; whereas God had expressly said, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'—We pass this, however, as an uncertain conjecture, and remark, that Satan afterwards proceeds from questioning, as though he desired information, to a direct and explicit confronting of the divine threatening, endeavouring to persuade her, that God would not be just to his word. He says, 'Ye shall not surely die.' He next proceeds to cast an open reproach on the great God, and he says, 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.'—Here he prefaces his reproach in a most vile and wicked manner, with an appeal to God for a confirmation of what he was about falsely to suggest, 'God doth know,' &c.—Again, he puts her in mind that there were some creatures above her, with an intent to excite in her pride and envy. It is as if he had said, 'Notwithstanding your dominion over the creatures in this lower world, there are other creatures above you;' for so our translation renders the word 'gods,' meaning the angels. Satan farther suggests, that these excel man, as in many other things, so particularly in knowledge; thereby tempting her to be discontented with her present condition. And as knowledge is the highest of all natural excellencies, he tempts her to desire a greater degree of it than God had allotted her, especially in her present state, and so to desire to be equal to the angels in knowledge; which might seem to her a plausible suggestion, since knowledge is a desirable perfection. He does not commend the knowledge of fallen angels, or persuade her to desire to be like them; but he speaks of her becoming like those who are the greatest favourites of God. It may hence be remarked, that it is a sin to desire many things which are in themselves excellent, provided it be the will of God that we should not enjoy them. A different sense, however, may be given of the Hebrew word which we

<sup>d</sup> Gen. ii. 17.

<sup>e</sup> The words of the prohibition, in Gen. ii. 17, are, 'Ye shall surely die;' whereas, in the account she gives thereof to the serpent, her words are *תמותם*, which Onkelos, in his Targum, renders, 'Ne forte moriamini.'

translate 'gods;' for it may as well be rendered, 'Ye shall be like God;' that is, 'Ye shall have a greater degree of the image of God,' particularly that part of it which consists in knowledge. But however plausible this suggestion might seem to be, she ought not to have desired this privilege, if God did not design to give it; especially before the condition of the covenant she was under was performed. Much less ought she to have ventured to have sinned against God to obtain it.—Further, Satan suggests, that her eating of the tree of knowledge would be a means to attain this greater degree of knowledge. Hence, he says, 'In the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened,' &c. We cannot suppose that he thought her so stupid as to conclude that there was a natural virtue in the fruit of the tree to produce this effect; for none can reasonably suppose that there is a natural connection between eating and increasing in knowledge. We may suppose, therefore, that he pretends that the eating of it was God's ordinance, for the attaining of knowledge; or that, as the tree of life was a sacramental ordinance, to signify man's attaining eternal life, this tree was an ordinance for her attaining knowledge; and hence, that God's design in prohibiting her from eating of it, was that she should be kept in ignorance, in comparison with what she might attain to by eating of it. Vile and blasphemous insinuation to suggest, not only that God envied her a privilege, which would have been so highly advantageous, but that the sinful violation of his law was an ordinance to obtain it!

It is farther supposed by some, though not mentioned in scripture, that Satan, to make his temptation more effectual, took and eat of the fruit of the tree himself, and pretended, as an argument to persuade her to do so likewise, that it was by this means that he, being a serpent, and, as such, on a level with other beasts of the same species, had attained the faculty of talking and reasoning, so that now he had acquired a kind of equality with man; and that, therefore, if she ate of the same fruit, she might easily suppose she should attain to be equal with angels. By these temptations, Eve was prevailed on; and so we read, that 'she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.' It may be, the fruit was plucked off by the serpent, and held out to her, and she, with a trembling hand, received it from him, and thereby fell from her state of innocency.

Having considered the fall of Eve, who was first in the transgression, we are now to speak of the fall of Adam. This is expressed more concisely in the words, 'She gave also unto her husband, and he did eat.' We are not to suppose that she gave him this fruit to eat without his consent to take it, or that she did not preface the action with something not recorded in scripture. It is most probable that she reported to him what had passed between her and the serpent, and prevailed on him by the same arguments by which she was overcome. So that Adam's fall was in some respect owing to the devil; though Eve was the more immediate instrument of it. We may add that, besides her alleging the arguments which the serpent had used to seduce her, it is more than probable that she continued to eat of the fruit, and that she commended the pleasantness of the taste of it above that of all other fruits; for it might seem to her, when fallen, to be much more pleasant than it really was, forbidden fruit being sweet to corrupt nature. We may suppose, too, that, through a bold presumption, and the blindness of her mind, and the hardness of her heart, which immediately ensued on her fall, she might insinuate to her husband that what the serpent had suggested was really true; for as he had said, 'Ye shall not surely die,' so now, though she had eaten of it, she was yet alive; and therefore that he might eat of it, without fearing any evil consequence. By these means he was prevailed upon, and hereby the ruin of mankind was completed.

### *The Consequences of the Fall.*

Having considered the sin and fall of our first parents, we shall now consider what followed, as related in Gen. iii. 7, &c. Here we observe that they immediately betray and discover their fallen state, inasmuch as they who before knew not what shame or fear meant, now experienced these consequences inseparable from sin. They knew that they were naked, and accordingly they were ashamed. They



had also a sense of guilt in their consciences, and therefore were afraid.—When God calls them to an account for what they had done, they, through fear, hide themselves from his presence. This shows how soon ignorance followed after the fall. How unreasonable was it to think that they could hide themselves from God! since ‘there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.’<sup>f</sup>—Farther, God expostulates with each of them, and they make excuses. The man lays the blame upon his wife: ‘The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.’<sup>g</sup> These words contain a charge against God himself, as throwing the blame on his providence: ‘The woman whom thou gavest to be with me.’ Here, too, was an instance of a breach of affection between him and his wife. As sin occasions breaches in families, and an alienation of affection in the nearest relations, so he complains of her as the cause of his ruin, as though he had not been himself active in the matter. The woman, on the other hand, lays the whole blame on the serpent: ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.’<sup>h</sup> There was, indeed, a deception or beguiling; for, as has been already observed, an innocent creature can hardly sin, but through inadvertency, as not apprehending the subtilty of the temptation, though a fallen creature sins presumptuously and with deliberation. She should not, however, have laid the whole blame on the serpent; for she had wisdom enough to have detected the fallacy of the temptation, and rectitude of nature sufficient to have preserved her from compliance with it, if she had improved those endowments which God at first gave her.

We shall now consider the aggravations of the sin of our first parents. It contained many other sins. Some have taken pains to show how, in particular instances, they broke all the ten commandments. But, passing that by, it is certain that they broke most of them, and these both of the first and the second table. It may truly be said, likewise, that by losing their innocency, and corrupting, defiling, and depraving their nature, and rendering themselves weak and unable to perform obedience to any command as they ought, they were virtually guilty of the breach of them all. Accordingly the apostle says, ‘Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.’<sup>i</sup> But, more particularly, there were several sins contained in their complicated crime. There was a vain curiosity to know more than what was consistent with their present condition, or, at least, a desire of increasing in knowledge in an unlawful way. There was discontentment with their present condition, though without the least shadow of reason leading to it. There was pride and ambition to be like the angels, or like God, in those things in which it was unlawful to desire it. It may be, they might desire to be like him in independency, absolute sovereignty, &c.; and it involves downright atheism for a creature to desire thus to be like him. There was also profaneness in supposing that the tree was God’s ordinance for the attaining of knowledge, and in accounting that which was in itself sinful a means to procure a greater degree of happiness. Their sin likewise contained unbelief, and a disregard either to the promise annexed to the covenant given to excite obedience, or to the threatening denounced to deter from sin; and, on the other hand, they gave credit to the devil rather than God. There was, moreover, bold and daring presumption in concluding that all would be well with them, or that they should remain happy though in open rebellion against God by the violation of his law; or in concluding, as the serpent suggested, that they should not surely die. Their sin, too, was the highest display of ingratitude, inasmuch as it was committed soon after they had received their being from God, and the honour of having all things in this world put under their feet, and the greatest plenty of provisions for both their satisfaction and their delight, while no tree of the garden was prohibited except that only of which they eat.<sup>k</sup> Moreover, as it was committed against an express warning, whatever dispute might arise concerning other things being lawful or unlawful, there was no question that it was a sin, because expressly forbidden by God, and a caution given them to abstain from it. Farther, if we consider them as endowed with a rectitude of nature,

f Job xxxiv. 22.

g Ver. 12.

h Ver. 13.

i James ii. 10.

k Gen. ii. 16, 17.

and in particular with that great degree of knowledge which God gave them, it must be reckoned a sin against the greatest light. Whatever inadvertency there might have been as to what first led the way to a sinful compliance, how much soever they pretended themselves to be beguiled and deceived as an excuse for their sin, they had a sufficient degree of knowledge to have guarded against the snare; and, had they made a right use of their knowledge, they would certainly have avoided it. Again, one of our first parents proving a tempter to the other, and the occasion of his ruin, was a flagrant instance of that want of conjugal affection and concern for the welfare of each other which the law of nature and the relation they stood in to one another required. Farther, as our first parents were made after the image of God, their sin involved their casting contempt upon it; for they could not but know that it would despoil them of it. As eternal blessedness, too, was to be expected if they yielded obedience, this also they contemned; and, as every sinner does, they despised their own souls in so doing. Finally, as Adam was a public person, the federal head of all his posterity, intrusted with the important affair of their happiness, and, as he knew that his fall would ruin them together with himself, there was in it not only a breach of trust, but a rendering of himself the common destroyer of all mankind. This was a greater reproach to him than his being their common father was an honour.

*Practical Inferences from the Doctrine of the Fall.*

We shall conclude with a few inferences from what has been said concerning the fall of our first parents.

1. If merely the mutability of man's will, without any propensity or inclination to sin in his nature, may endanger, though not necessitate his fall, especially when left to himself, as the result of God's sovereign will; then how deplorable is the state of fallen man, when left to himself by God in a judicial way, he being, at the same time, indisposed for any thing that is good!

2. From the action of the devil, in attempting to ruin man, without the least provocation, merely out of malice against God, we may infer the vile and heinous nature of sin; its irreconcilable opposition to God; and how much they resemble the devils who endeavour to persuade others to join with them as confederates in iniquity, and thereby to bring them under the same condemnation with themselves. To do this is contrary to the dictates of human nature, unless considered as vile, degenerate, and depraved by sin.

3. How dangerous a thing is it to go in the way of temptation, or to parley with it, and not to resist the first motion which is made to turn us aside from our duty! And what need have we daily to pray, as instructed by our Saviour, that God would not, by any occurrence of providence, lead us into temptation!

4. Observe the progress and great increase of sin. It is like a spreading leprosy, and arises to a great height from small beginnings. Persons proceed from one degree of wickedness to another, without considering what will be the sad effect and consequence.

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ADAM'S REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER, AND THE IMPUTATION OF HIS GUILT.

QUESTION XXII. *Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?*

ANSWER. The covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

*The Federal Position of Eve.*

HAVING shown, under the foregoing Answer, how our first parents sinned and fell, we are now led to consider how their fall affected all their posterity, whom they re-



presented. It is said, that the covenant was made with Adam, as a federal head, not for himself only, but for all his posterity; so that they sinned and fell with him.

Before we enter more particularly on this subject, it may not be improper to inquire, whether the character of being the head of the covenant respects only Adam, or both our first parents? I am sensible there are many who think this covenant was made with Adam, as the head of his posterity, exclusive of Eve. They think, likewise, that, as he did not represent her therein, but his seed, she was not, together with him, the representative of mankind; that, though the covenant was made with her, and she was equally obliged to perform its conditions, she was to stand or fall only for herself, her concern in it being only personal; that when she fell, being 'first in the transgression,' all mankind could not be said to sin and fall in her, as they did in Adam; and that, if she alone had sinned, she would have perished alone. When it is objected to this theory, that she could not, according to it, be the mother of innocent children, for 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' the usual reply, which is only matter of conjecture, is, that God would have created some other woman, who should have been the mother of a sinless posterity. The reason why they suppose the covenant to have been made only with Adam, is, that we never read expressly, in scripture, of its being made with Eve in behalf of her posterity; and that, in particular, it is said that 'the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'<sup>1</sup> It is observed, that the law here was given to him before the woman was created; for it is said, in the following words, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.' In other scriptures which treat of this matter, we read of the man's being the head of the covenant, but not his wife. Thus the apostle compares Adam, whom he styles 'The first man,'<sup>m</sup> as the head of this covenant, with Christ, whom he calls, 'The second man,' as the head of the covenant of grace. Elsewhere also he says, 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'<sup>n</sup> Again, 'By one man sin entered into the world,'<sup>o</sup> &c.; and, 'By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.'<sup>p</sup> From its being said, not by the disobedience of our first parents, but by that of one of them, namely, Adam, it is inferred that he only was the head of the covenant, and the representative of mankind.

Now, though I would not be too peremptory in determining this matter, yet, I think, a reply may be made to the reasoning which I have stated. Though it is said, in the scripture referred to, that God forbade the man to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, before the woman was created, yet she expressly says, that the prohibition respected them both,<sup>q</sup> when she tells the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat thereof, lest ye die.'<sup>r</sup> Besides, we read, that Eve had dominion over the creatures, as well as Adam.<sup>s</sup> It is said, indeed, that 'God created man,' &c. but by the word man both our first parents are intended. For it immediately follows, 'And he blessed them;' so that the woman was not excluded. We may, therefore, apply the apostle's words, though used with another view, 'The man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord,'<sup>t</sup> to this particular dispensation of providence. There seems, also, to be the same reason for one's being constituted the federal head of their posterity, as the other; for they were both designed to be its common parents. The tenor of the covenant seems to be the same with respect to them both; and the tree of life was a seal and pledge of blessings to be conveyed by both.

1 Gen. ii. 16, 17. m 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. n 1 Cor. xv. 22. o Rom. v. 12. p Ver. 19.

q The compilers of the LXX. seem to have understood the words in this sense, when they render the text in Gen. ii. 17. *ἡ δ' ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ βασιαν ἀπολαύσας*.

r Gen. iii. 2, 3.

s Gen. i. 26—28.

t 1 Cor. xi. 11.

*The Representative Character of Adam.*

We now proceed to prove that Adam was a public person, the head of the covenant, with whom it was made for himself and for all his posterity. When we speak of him as the head of his posterity, we mean something more than that he was their common parent. Had there been no other idea than this in his being their head, I cannot see how they could be said to fall in him. For it does not seem agreeable to the justice of God to punish children for their parents' sins, unless they make them their own,—at least, not with such a punishment as involves a separation from his presence, and a liability to the condemning sentence of the law. Adam, therefore, must be considered as constituted the head of his posterity in a federal way, by an act of God's sovereign will; and so must be regarded as their representative, as well as their common parent. If this can be proved, they may be said to fall with him. To understand this, we must conclude him to have been the head of the world, even as Christ is the Head of his elect; so that in the same sense as Christ's righteousness becomes theirs, namely, by imputation, Adam's obedience, had he stood, would have been imputed to all his posterity, as his sin is now that he has fallen. This is a doctrine founded on pure revelation; and we must have recourse to scripture to evince its truth.

There are several scriptures in which this doctrine is contained; as that in which the apostle speaks concerning our fall in Adam, whom he calls, 'the figure' of him that was to come.<sup>x</sup> Now, in what was Adam a type of Christ? Not as he was a man, consisting of soul and body; for, in that respect, all that lived before Christ might as justly be called types of him. Whenever we read in scripture of any person or thing being a type, there are some peculiar circumstances by which it may be distinguished from all other persons or things which are not types. Now Adam was distinguished from all other persons, as he was the federal head of all his posterity. That he was so, appears from the fact that the apostle not only occasionally mentions it, but largely insists on it, and shows in what respect it was true. He particularly observes, that as one conveyed death, the other was the Head or Prince of life. These respective things, indeed, were directly opposite; so that the analogy or resemblance consisted only in the manner of conveying them. Hence, as death did not, in the first instance of our liability to it, become due to us on account of our own actual sin, but on account of the sin of Adam; so the right we have to eternal life, by justification, is the result, not of our own obedience, but of Christ's. This is plainly the purport of the apostle's reasoning. Now, if Christ was, in this respect, a federal Head and Representative of his people, then Adam, who was in this, or in nothing, his type or figure, must be the head of a covenant in which his posterity were included. Another scripture, by which this may be proved, is that in which the apostle speaks of 'the first and the second Adam.'<sup>y</sup> By the latter, he means Christ. Now, why should he be called 'the second Man,' who lived so many ages after Adam, if the apostle did not design to speak of him as typified by Adam, or as bearing some resemblance to him? In other expressions, he seems to imply as much, and shows how we derive death from Adam, of whom he had been speaking in the foregoing verses. Thus he says, 'The first man was of the earth, earthy;' and, 'As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy;' and, 'We have borne the image of the earthy.' Now, if Adam was the root and occasion of all the miseries we endure in this world, arising from his violation of the covenant he was under, it plainly follows, that he was the head and representative of all his posterity. For farther proof we may consider the apostle's method of reasoning, in the scripture first quoted: 'By one man sin entered into the world, for that all have sinned.' This I would choose to render, 'By one man sin entered into the world,' that is, by the first man, 'in whom all have sinned,'<sup>z</sup> rather than as it is rendered in our translation. For this seems to be the most natural sense of the words; <sup>a</sup> it agrees best with the apostle's general design or argument, insisted on and farther illustrated in the following

u Τύπος, the type.

x Rom. v. 14.

y 1 Cor. xv. 45—49.

z Rom. v. 12.

a φ' γ'.



verses; and it proves that Adam, in whom all sinned, was their head and representative. Again, the apostle speaks of penal evils, consequent on Adam's sin, which could not have befallen us, had he not been our federal head and representative. Thus he says,<sup>b</sup> 'By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.'<sup>c</sup> It may be observed, that the apostle, in this text, uses a word translated 'condemnation,'<sup>d</sup> which cannot, with any manner of consistency, be understood in any other than a forensic sense. Hence, what he argues is, that we are liable to condemnation by the offence of Adam. And this certainly proves the imputation of his offence to us; and consequently, that he is considered as our federal head.

That Adam was the federal head of his posterity, appears farther from the fact that all mankind are exposed to many miseries and to death, which are of a penal nature, and which must therefore be considered as the consequence of sin. Now, they cannot be the consequence of actual sin, in those who are miserable and die as soon as they are born, who have not 'sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' But they must be the result of his sin; and this they could not be, had he not been the federal head of all his posterity.

It is objected to this, that God might, out of his mere sovereignty, ordain that his creatures should be exposed to some degree of misery; that, if this misery be not considered as the punishment of sin in infants, it does not prove the imputation of Adam's sin to them; that even their death, considered only as a separation of soul and body, may not contain a proper idea of punishment, which consists in the stroke of justice demanding satisfaction for sin, but may be reckoned only an expedient or a necessary means for their attaining eternal life; and that therefore it does not follow, that our being liable to death before we have done good or evil, is necessarily a punishment due to that sin which was committed by Adam. Now, I will not deny that God might, out of his mere sovereignty, dispense some lesser degrees of natural evil to a sinless creature; nor will I contend with any who shall say, that he might, without any dishonour to his perfections, send on him an evil, sensibly great, provided it were not only consistent with his love, but attended with those manifestations and displays of it which would more than compensate for it, and, at the same time, not have any tendency to prevent the answering of the end of his being. Yet I may be bold to say, that, from the nature of the thing, God cannot inflict even the least degree of punishment on a creature who is, in all respects, guiltless. If, therefore, these lesser evils are penal, they are the consequence of Adam's sin. Now death must be considered as a penal evil; for, as such, it was first denounced as a part of the curse, consequent on Adam's sin. The apostle also says, 'The wages of sin is death;'<sup>e</sup> and elsewhere he speaks of all men as 'dying in Adam.'<sup>f</sup> The sin of Adam, therefore, is imputed to all mankind; and, consequently, he was their federal head and representative in the covenant that he was under.

### *Christ not Represented by Adam.*

They whose federal head and representative Adam was, are such as descended from him by ordinary generation. The design of this limitation is to signify, that

<sup>b</sup> Rom. v. 18.

<sup>c</sup> The words are, *ὅς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατακρίμα*. The word 'judgment,' though not in the original, is very justly supplied in our translation, from ver. 16. Or, as the learned Grotius observes, the word *εἰς* might have been supplied; and then the meaning is, 'Res processit in condemnationem.' J. Capellus gives a very good sense of the text, when he compares Adam as the head, who brought death into the world, with Christ, by whom life is obtained. His words are these: 'Quemadmodum omnes homines, qui condemnantur, reatum suum contraxerunt, ab una unius hominis offensā; sic et quotquot vivificantur, absolutionem suam obtinuerunt ab una unius hominis obedientia.'

<sup>d</sup> The word *κατακρίμα* is used, in a forensic sense, in those places of the New Testament in which it is found. Thus ver. 16. of this chapter, and chap. viii. 1. Accordingly it signifies a judgment unto condemnation; as also do those words, the sense of which has an affinity to it, in Rom. viii. 34, *τις ὁ κατακρίνων*; and also *ἀκατακρίτος*, as in Acts xvi. 37. and chap. xxii. 25. So that, according to the construction of the word, though *κρίμα* signifies 'judicium' in general, *κατακρίμα* signifies 'judicium adversus aliquem,' or 'condemnation.'

<sup>e</sup> Rom. vi. 23.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22.

our Saviour is excepted; and that he did not sin or fall in him, inasmuch as he was born of a virgin. Though he had the same human nature with all Adam's posterity, he did not derive it from him in the same way as they do. A similitude of nature, or his being a true and proper man, does not render him a descendant from Adam, in the same way as we are. The formation of his human nature having been the effect of miraculous, supernatural, creating power, he was no more liable to Adam's sin, as being a man, than a world of men would be, should God create them out of nothing, or out of the dust of the ground, by a mediate creation. Such a creation would be no more miraculous, or supernatural, than was the formation of the human nature of Christ in the womb of a virgin. Now, as persons so formed would not be concerned in Adam's sin or fall, whatever similitude there might be of nature, even so our Saviour was not concerned in it.

That we might understand that he was not included in the federal transaction with Adam, the apostle, in the passage formerly quoted,<sup>s</sup> opposes him as 'the second man,' the federal head of his elect or spiritual seed, to Adam, 'the first man,' and head of his natural seed. Again, as an argument, that his extraordinary and miraculous conception exempted him from any concern in Adam's sin and fall, the angel who gave the intimation tells the blessed Virgin, his mother, that 'the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her,' says, 'therefore that Holy Thing, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' Here he implies, that, in the formation of our Lord's human nature, he was holy; and that he had no concern in the guilt of Adam's sin, because of the manner of his formation or conception. This is certainly a better way of accounting for his being sinless, than to pretend, as the Papists do, that his mother was sinless. And that pretence of theirs will do no service to their cause, unless they could ascend in a line to our first parents, and so prove that all our Saviour's progenitors as well as the Virgin, were immaculate; and this is more than they pretend to do.

#### *Man not Represented by Adam after his Fall.*

It is farther observed, in this Answer, that mankind sinned and fell with Adam in his 'first transgression.' We hence infer that they had no concern in those sins which he committed afterwards. Adam, as soon as he sinned, though he was their natural head or common father, lost the honour and prerogative of being the federal head of his posterity. The covenant being broken, all the evils arising thence, to which we were liable, devolved upon us. Nor could any of the blessings contained in the covenant be conveyed to us by him after his fall; for it was impossible for him then to perform sinless obedience, which was the condition of the life promised. This result does not arise so much from the nature of the covenant, as from the change which there was in man, with whom it was made. The law or covenant would have given life, if man could have yielded perfect obedience; but his fall rendered that impossible. The obligation of it as a law distinct from a covenant, and also the curse, arising from its sanction, remain still in force against fallen man; but, as a covenant in which life was promised, it was, from that time, abrogated. Hence, the apostle speaks of it as being 'weak through the flesh,'<sup>b</sup> that is, by reason of Adam's transgression. From the time of his fall, therefore, Adam ceased to be the federal head of his posterity, or the means of conveying life to them. Hence, those sins which he committed afterwards were no more imputed to them, to enhance their condemnation than his repentance or good works were imputed for their justification.

#### *The Imputation of Adam's sin, and his Representative Character defended.*

Having considered the first transgression of Adam as imputed to all those who descended from him by ordinary generation, we shall proceed to consider how this doctrine is opposed by those who are in the contrary way of thinking.



1. It is objected, that what is done by one man, cannot be imputed to another, as being contrary to the divine perfections, to the law of nature, and the express words of scripture. What is done by us in our own persons, it is allowed may be imputed to us, whether it be good or evil. Thus it is said, that Phinehas' zeal in executing judgment, by which means the plague was stayed, was counted to him for righteousness;<sup>i</sup> and so was Abraham's faith.<sup>k</sup> Accordingly, God approved of their respective good actions, as what denominated them righteous persons; and placed them to their account, as bestowing on them some corresponding rewards. So, in the same way, a man's own sin may be imputed to him, and he may be dealt with as an offender. We are told, however, that to impute the sin committed by one person to another, is to suppose that he has committed that sin which was really committed by another, and that, in doing this, the Judge of all the earth would not do right.

Now, when we speak of persons being punished for a crime committed by another as being imputed to them, we understand the word 'imputation' in a forensic sense; and we do not suppose that there is a wrong judgment passed on persons or things, as though the crime were reckoned to have been committed by them. Accordingly, we do not say, that we committed that sin which was more immediately committed by Adam. In him it was an actual sin; it is ours as imputed to us, or as we are punished for it, according to the demerit of the offence, and the tenor of the covenant in which we were included. Moreover, it is not contrary to the law of nature or nations, for the iniquity of some public persons to be punished in many others, so that whole cities and nations suffer on their account. As to scripture instances of this, we often read of whole families and nations suffering for the crimes of those who have been public persons, and exemplary in sinning. Thus Achan who coveted the wedge of gold, suffered not alone for his sin; but 'his sons and his daughters were stoned, and burned with fire,' together with himself,<sup>l</sup> though we do not expressly read that they were confederates with him in the crime. God also threatened the Amalekites, who, without provocation, came out against Israel in the wilderness, that he would have 'war with them for this, from generation to generation;<sup>m</sup> and, in pursuance of this threatening, God, imputing the crime of their forefathers to their posterity some hundreds of years after, ordered Saul, 'to go and utterly destroy them, by slaying both man and woman, infant and suckling.'<sup>n</sup> The sin of Jeroboam, in like manner, was punished in his posterity, according to the threatening denounced;<sup>o</sup> as was also the sin of Ahab.<sup>p</sup> The church, too, acknowledges that it was a righteous dispensation of providence for God to bring upon Judah those miseries which immediately preceded and followed their being carried captive: for they say, 'Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquity.'<sup>q</sup> Our Saviour speaks to the same purpose, when he tells the Jews, that 'upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.'<sup>r</sup> These instances, and others of a similar nature, prove that it is no unheard-of thing, for one man to suffer for a crime committed by another.<sup>s</sup>

But I am sensible that the principal thing intended in the objection, when imputation is supposed to be contrary to scripture, is, that it contradicts the sense of what the prophet says, when he tells the people, that 'they should not have occa-

<sup>i</sup> Psal. cvi. 30, 31.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. iv. 9, 23.

<sup>l</sup> Josh. vii. 24, 25.

<sup>m</sup> Exod. xvii. 16.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings xiv. 10, 11.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings xxi. 21, 22.

<sup>q</sup> Lam. v. 7.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxiii. 35.

<sup>s</sup> This is not only agreeable to many instances contained in scripture, but has been acknowledged to be just by the very Heathen, as agreeable to the law of nature and nations. Thus one says: Sometimes a whole city is punished for the wickedness of one man. Thus Hesiod, *πολλὰς καὶ ἑμπεσασα πόλεις κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἵκανον*; and Horace says, 'Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.' And one observes, that it was the custom in several cities of Greece to inflict the same punishments on the children of tyrants, as their fathers had done on others: 'In Græcis civitatibus liberi tyrannorum, suppressis illis, eodem supplicio afficiantur.' Vid Cicero. Epist. ad Brut. xv. And Q. Curt. lib. vi. speaks of a law observed among the Macedonians, in which, traitorous conspiracies against the life of the prince were punished, not only in the traitors themselves, but in their near relations, 'Qui regi insidiati essent, illi cum cognatis et troinquis suis morte afficerentur.'

sion any more to use this proverb in Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge;' for 'the soul that sinneth shall die.'<sup>2</sup> Now, the meaning of this scripture is, that if they were humble and penitent, and did not commit those crimes which their fathers had done, they should not be punished for them. This was a special act of favour, which, on the supposition of their acting as they were required to do, God would grant to them; and it is as much as to say, that he would not impute their fathers' sins to them, or suffer them to be carried captive, merely because their fathers had deserved this desolating judgment. But this does not, in all respects, agree with the instance before us. We are considering Adam as the federal head of his posterity; but their fathers were not so considered in this and similar scriptures. Moreover, the objectors will hardly deny, that natural death, and the many evils of this life, are a punishment, in some respects, for the sin of our first parents. Hence, the question is not, Whether some degree of punishment may follow from it? but, Whether the greatest degree of the punishment of sin in hell, can be said to be the consequence of it? But this we shall be led more particularly to consider under a following Answer.<sup>3</sup>

2. It is farther objected, that it is not agreeable to the divine perfections for God to appoint Adam to be the head and representative of all his posterity, so that they must stand or fall in him, with respect to their spiritual and eternal concerns; inasmuch as this was not done by their own choice and consent, which they were not capable of giving, since they were not in existence. The case, say the objectors, is the same as if a king should appoint a representative body of men, and give them a power to enact laws, whereby his subjects should be dispossessed of their estates and properties, which no one can suppose to be just; while, if they had chosen them themselves, they would have no reason to complain of any injustice that was done them, inasmuch as the laws, made by their representatives, are, in effect, their own laws. So, say they in the case before us, had all mankind chosen Adam to be their representative, or consented to stand or fall in him, there would have been no reason to complain of the dispensation of God's providence, in making him their public head; but as it was otherwise, it does not seem agreeable to the justice of God, so to constitute him the head and representative of all his posterity, that, by his fall, they should be involved in ruin and eternal perdition.

There are various methods taken to answer this objection. Some say little more to it than that if Adam had retained his integrity, we should have accepted of and rejoiced in that life which he would have procured by his standing. There would then have been no complaint, or finding fault with the divine dispensation, as if it had been unjust. Hence, since he fell, and brought death into the world, it is reasonable that we should submit, and acknowledge that all the ways of God are equal. But, though we must all allow that submission to the will of God, in whatever he does, is the creature's duty, I cannot think this a sufficient answer to the objection, and therefore would not lay much stress upon it, but proceed to consider what may be farther said in answer to it. Others say, that, since Adam was the common father of mankind, and consequently the most honourable of them, our Saviour only excepted, whom he did not represent, it was fit that he should have the honour conferred upon him of being their representative; so that, had all his posterity been in existence, and the choice of a representative been wholly referred to them, the law of nature would have directed to and pointed out the man, who ought to have the preference to all others. This answer bids fairer, I confess, to remove the difficulty than the other; especially if it be added, that God might have given Adam some advantages of nature above the rest of mankind, besides the relative one arising from his being their common father, and that, therefore, it would have been their interest, as well as their duty, to have chosen him, as being best qualified to perform the work that was devolved upon him. But as this will not wholly remove the difficulty, it is farther alleged that as God chose him, we ought to acquiesce in his choice. Indeed, had all mankind been then in existence, supposing, as we are obliged to do, that they were in a state of perfect holiness, they would have acknowledged the equity of the divine dispensation; otherwise



they would have actually sinned and fallen, in rejecting and complaining of the will of God. This, however, will not satisfy those who advance the contrary scheme of doctrine, and deny the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, who still complain of it as a very severe dispensation, and conclude that the sovereignty of God is pleaded for against his other perfections. Something farther, therefore, must be added, in answer to the objection. Now, we freely allow, that it is not equitable, to use the similitude taken from human forms of government, for a king to appoint a representative who shall have a power committed to him to take away the properties or estates of his subjects. But this, in many respects, does not agree with the matter under consideration. Yet, if we suppose that these subjects had nothing which they could call their own, separate from the will of the prince, that their properties and estates were not only defended, but given by him, and that they were given upon the tenure that he reserved to himself a right to dispossess them of them at his pleasure; in this case, he might, without any injustice done them, appoint a representative by whose conduct they might be forfeited or retained. This agrees with our present argument. Accordingly, there were some things which Adam possessed in his state of innocency, and others which he was given to expect, had he stood, which he had no natural right to, separate from the divine will. It hence follows, that God might, without doing his posterity any injustice, repose this right in the hands of a mutable creature, so that it should be retained or lost for them, according as he stood or fell. This will appear less exceptionable, too, when we consider the nature of that guilt which all mankind were brought under by Adam's sin, and the loss of original righteousness as the consequence of his fall. They who maintain the other side of the question, generally represent us as if we supposed that there were no difference between this guilt, and that contracted by actual sins, together with the punishment resulting from them, how great soever they are. This subject, however, will be more particularly considered under a following Answer;<sup>x</sup> when we shall endeavour to take a just estimate of the difference between the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to us, and that of actual sins committed by us.

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### ORIGINAL SIN.

QUESTION XXIII. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSWER. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

QUESTION XXIV. *What is sin?*

ANSWER. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

QUESTION XXV. *Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

ANSWER. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

QUESTION XXVI. *How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?*

ANSWER. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them, in that way, are conceived and born in sin.

### *The Nature of Sin.*

HAVING considered the fall of our first parents, and the imputation of the sin of it to all mankind, we are now led to speak concerning the sin and misery which followed. This is not called merely a single act of sin, or one particular instance of misery, but a state of sin and misery. Man's being brought into a state of sin, is sometimes called sin's reigning or having dominion over him; and his being brought

<sup>x</sup> See Quest. xxvii.

into a state of misery, is called the reign or dominion of death. As, by various steps, we proceed from one degree of sin unto another, so our condemnation is gradually enhanced. This is the subject of the first of these Answers.

Here we have a brief definition of sin. In this something is supposed, namely, that there was a law given and promulgated, as a rule of obedience to the reasonable creature, without which there could be no sin committed, or guilt contracted. ‘Where no law is, there is no transgression.’<sup>y</sup> ‘Sin is not imputed where there is no law.’<sup>z</sup> And its being observed that the subjects bound by this law are reasonable creatures, gives us to understand, that, though other creatures are the effect of God’s power, and the objects of his providence, they are not the subjects of moral government. Hence, they cannot be under a law; inasmuch as they are not capable of understanding their relation to God as a Sovereign, or their obligation to obey him, or the meaning of a law as the rule of obedience.

Moreover, we have, in this Answer, an account of the formal nature of sin. It is considered, first, in its negative or rather privative idea, as a defect or want of conformity to the law, a privation of that rectitude of nature or righteousness which man had at first, or our not performing that which we are bound by this law of God to do. Those particular instances of sin which are included in the idea of it, are called sins of omission. It is next described by its positive idea; and so is called a transgression of the law, or a doing of that which is forbidden by it. The apostle calls it, ‘The transgression of the law.’<sup>a</sup> We shall not, however, insist on this subject at present; as we shall have occasion to enlarge on it, when we consider the sins forbidden under each of the Ten Commandments, and the various aggravations of them.<sup>b</sup>

### *The Sinfulness of all Mankind as fallen in Adam.*

We are, in the next Answer, led to consider the sinfulness of all mankind, as fallen in Adam, or original sin, as derived to and discovered in us. This consists more especially in our being guilty of Adam’s first sin, in our wanting that righteousness which he was possessed of, and in that corruption of nature whence all actual transgressions proceed.

1. We shall inquire what we are to understand by the guilt of Adam’s first sin. His disobedience, as was formerly shown, being imputed to his posterity, the result is, that all the world becomes guilty before God. Guilt is an obligation or liability to suffer punishment for an offence committed, in proportion to its aggravations. Now, as this guilt was not contracted by us but imputed to us, we must consider it as the same in all, or as not admitting of any degrees. Yet there is a very great difference between that guilt which is the result of sin imputed to us, and that which arises from sin’s being committed by us. They who do not put a just difference between these, give occasion to many prejudices against this doctrine, and do not sufficiently vindicate the perfections of God, in his judiciary proceedings, in punishing the one or the other of them. That we may avoid this inconvenience, let it be considered, that original and actual sins differ more especially in two respects. First, the sin of our first parents, how heinous soever it was in them, as being an actual transgression, attended with the highest aggravations, cannot be said to be our actual sin, or committed by an act of our will. Hence, though the imputation of it to us, as has been before proved, is righteous; yet it has not such circumstances attending it as if it had been committed by us. Secondly, the guilt of it, or the punishment due to it, cannot be so great as the guilt we contract, or the punishment we are liable to for actual sins. These are committed with the approbation and consent of the will, and are opposed to some degree of light, and convictions of conscience, and manifold engagements to the contrary. But these circumstances do not properly belong to Adam’s sin, as imputed to us; nor is the punishment due to it the same as if it had been committed by us in our own persons.

That we may not be misunderstood, let it be considered, that we are not speak-

y Rom. iv. 15.

z Rom. v. 13.

a 1 John iii. 4.

b See vol. ii. Quest. cv.—cli.



ing of the corruption of nature inherent in us. We do not deny that the fountain which sends forth all actual sins, or sin reigning in the heart, is, in various respects, more aggravated than many others committed by us, which we call actual transgressions; just as the corrupt fountain is worse than the streams, or the root than the branch, or the cause than the effect. But when, as at present, we consider Adam's sin only as imputed, and as being antecedent to that corruption of nature which is the immediate cause of sinful actions, or when we distinguish between original sin as imputed and inherent, we understand by the former, only that it cannot expose those who never committed any actual sins to so great a degree of guilt and punishment, as the sins committed by actual transgressors expose them to.

Let it be farther observed, that we do not say that there is no punishment due to original sin as imputed to us. To say this, would be to suppose that there is no guilt attending it; which is contrary to what we have already proved. All our design, at present, is, to put a just difference between Adam's sin, imputed to us, and those sins which are committed by us. Indeed, if what we have said on this subject be not true, the state of infants dying in infancy, under the guilt of Adam's sin, must be equally deplorable with that of the rest of mankind. When I find some expressing themselves to this effect, I cannot wonder that others who deny the doctrine of original sin are offended at it. It is one thing to say that they are exposed to no punishment at all, which none who observe the miseries to which we are liable, from our first appearance in the world till our leaving it, whether sooner or later, can well deny; and another thing to say, that they are exposed to the same punishment for it as if they had actually committed it. The former we allow; the latter we must take leave to deny, lest we should give occasion to any to think that the Judge of all does any thing which wears even the least appearance of severity and injustice. What we have thus said concerning the imputation to us of the guilt of Adam's first sin, leads us to consider its effects. Accordingly,

2. Man is said to want that righteousness which he had at first, which is generally called 'original righteousness.' This is styled the *privative* part of original sin; as the corruption of the human nature, and its propensity to all sin, is the *positive* part. In considering the former, or man's want of original righteousness, we may observe, that man has not wholly lost God's natural image, which he possessed as an intelligent creature, consisting in his being endowed as such with an understanding capable of some degree of the knowledge of himself and divine things, and a will, in many respects, free, namely, as to what concerns natural things, or some external branches of religion, or things materially good, and in his having executive powers to act agreeably to the dictates of his will and understanding. These, indeed, are miserably defaced, and come far short of that perfection which he had in the state in which he was created. Some have compared his condition to an old decayed building, which has, by the ruins of time, lost its strength and beauty; though it retains something of the shape and resemblance of what it was before. Thus the powers and faculties of the soul are weakened, but not wholly lost, by the fall. They are like the fruits of the earth, which are shrivelled and withered in winter, and look as though they were dead; or like a man who has outlived himself, and has lost the vivacity and sprightliness of his parts, as well as the beauty of his body, which he formerly had. Again, our ability to yield acceptable obedience to God, much more perfect obedience, is wholly lost; we being destitute of a principle of spiritual life and grace, which must, if ever we have it, be implanted in regeneration. Hence, every one may say with the apostle, 'In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.' Moreover, we are destitute of a right to the heavenly blessedness, and all those privileges which were promised on condition of our first parents performing perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant made with them in their state of innocency.

This want of original righteousness is the immediate consequence of Adam's

first sin. By original righteousness, we understand that freedom from guilt which man had before he sinned, which exempted him from any liability to condemnation, and afforded him a plea before God for his retaining the blessings he possessed, and which, had he persisted longer in his integrity, would have given him a right to a greater degree of happiness. His perfect obedience was his righteousness, in a forensic sense; and the failure of it in our first parents, rendered both them and us destitute of it. But as this is the same as what is meant by the foregoing words, which speak of us as guilty of Adam's first sin, we must consider something else as intended, when we are said to want that righteousness wherein he was created. We formerly observed, that by the fall of our first parents, the natural image of God in man was defaced. But now we are to speak of his supernatural image, as what was wholly lost; so that all mankind are, by nature, destitute of a principle of grace. On this account it may truly be said, as the apostle does, 'There is none righteous; no, not one.'<sup>d</sup> Elsewhere man is called, 'a transgressor from the womb';<sup>e</sup> and is said to be, by nature, not only 'a child of wrath,' but 'dead in trespasses and sins.'<sup>f</sup> Till, therefore, we are created again to good works, or a new principle of grace is implanted in regeneration, there is no salvation. Our being destitute of the supernatural principle of grace, is distinguished from that propensity to sin, or corruption of nature, which is spoken of in the following words of this Answer. Considering it as thus distinguished, and as called, by some, the *privative* part of original sin, we speak of man's destitution or deprivation as of that which was his glory, and which tended to his defence against the assaults of temptation, and those actual transgressions which are the consequence. This excellent endowment man is said to have lost.

Some divines express themselves with a degree of caution when treating on this subject. Though they allow that man has lost this righteousness, they will hardly own that God took it away, though it were by a judicial act, supposing that this would argue him to be the author of sin. I would not blame the least degree of concern expressed to guard against such a consequence, did it really follow from our asserting it. I cannot but conclude, however, that the holiness of God may be vindicated, though we should assert that he deprived man of this righteousness as a punishment of his sin, or denied him that power to perform perfect obedience which he conferred on him at first. There is a vast difference between God's restoring to him his lost power to perform that which is truly and supernaturally good in all its circumstances, and the infusing of habits of sin into his nature. The latter we acknowledge he could not do consistently with his holiness, and shall make this farther appear under a following head. But the other he might do, that is, leave man destitute of a power to walk before him in holiness and righteousness. For if God had been obliged to have given him this power, then his bestowing it on fallen man would be rather a debt than a grace, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel. But this leads us to consider the *positive* part of original sin.

3. Man's sinfulness, as fallen, consists in the corruption of his nature, or a propensity and inclination to all evil. This, it is observed, is commonly called original sin, that is, original sin inherent, as distinguished from sin imputed to us, which has been already considered. That the nature of man is vitiated, corrupted, and prone to all that is bad, is taken for granted by all. Indeed, he who denies it must either be very much unacquainted with himself, or hardly retain the common notices which we have of moral good and evil. Man's corruption is frequently represented in scripture as a plague, defilement, or deadly evil with which his heart is affected. On this account it is said that 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked';<sup>g</sup> and that 'out of it proceed evil thoughts,' and all other abominations of the most heinous nature,<sup>h</sup> unless prevented by the grace of God.

This propensity of nature to sin, discovers itself in the first dawn of our reason. We no sooner appear to be men, than we give ground to conclude that we are sinners. Accordingly it is said, 'The imagination of man's heart is only evil,' and that 'from his youth.'<sup>i</sup> And he is represented as 'estranged from the womb,

<sup>d</sup> Rom. iii. 10.  
<sup>h</sup> Matt. xv. 19.

<sup>e</sup> Isa. xlvi. 8.  
<sup>i</sup> Gen. vi. 5. compared with chap. viii. 21.

<sup>f</sup> Eph. ii. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Jer. xvii. 9.



going astray as soon as he is born, speaking lies.<sup>k</sup> These statements, however, are to be understood with the limitation that we are prone to sin as soon as we have any dispositions or inclinations to any thing; for it cannot be supposed that man is disposed to commit actual sin before he is capable of acting. Some, indeed, have attempted to prove that the soul of a child sins as soon as it is united to the body in the womb, and have carried this indefensible conjecture so far as to maintain that actual sin is committed in the womb. This opinion, however, is not only destitute of all manner of proof, but seems so very absurd that few will be convinced by it; and hence it needs no confutation.

Man's propensity to sin, whenever it may be said to discover itself, is certainly not equal in all. In this respect it differs from Adam's guilt, as imputed to us, and from our want of original righteousness, as the immediate consequence. The corrupt inclinations of man appear, from universal experience, as well as from the concurrent testimony of scripture, to be of an increasing nature. Hence some are more obstinate and hardened in sin than others; and corrupt habits in many are compared to the tincture of the Ethiopian, or the leopard's spots,<sup>l</sup> which no human art can take away. We are, indeed, naturally prone to sin at first; but afterwards the leprosy spreads, and the propensity or inclination to it increases by repeated acts, or a course of sin. The psalmist takes notice of this, in a beautiful climax or gradation: 'They know not, neither will they understand, they walk in darkness.'<sup>m</sup>

### *The Origin of Sin in Man.*

We shall now take occasion to speak something concerning the rise or origin of man's sinfulness. This is a difficulty which many have attempted to account for and explain, though with as little success as anything which comes within the compass of our inquiries. Some ancient heretics<sup>n</sup> thought that, because it could not be from God, who is the author of nothing but what is good, there are two first causes; one, of all good, which is God, and the other of all evil. But this is deservedly exploded, as a most dangerous and absurd notion. Others seem to assert that God is the author of it; and, that they may exculpate themselves from making him the author of sin, which is the vilest reproach that can be cast upon him, they add, that he inflicts it in a judicial way, as a punishment for the sin of our first parents, and that it is no reflection on him to suppose that, as a judge, he may put this propensity to sin into our nature; so that it is, as it were, concreated with the soul, or derived to us at the same time that it is formed in and united to the body. But we cannot by any means conclude God to be the author of it, though it be as a Judge; for that would be to suppose his vindictive justice inconsistent with the spotless purity of his nature. We read, indeed, of God's 'giving men up to their own hearts' lust,'<sup>o</sup> as a punishment for their sins; but never of his producing in them an inclination to sin, though it be under the notion of a punishment. But this having been proved and illustrated under a foregoing Answer, when we spoke concerning the providence of God as conversant about those actions to which sin is annexed in a judicial way, we shall pass it over in this place.<sup>p</sup>

The Pelagians, and after them, the Papists, and some among the Remonstrants, being sensible that this propensity of nature to sin cannot be denied, have taken such a method to account for it, as makes it a very innocent and harmless thing. That it may appear agreeable to the notion which they maintain of the innocence of man by nature, they suppose that the first motions or inclinations of the soul to sin, or, to use their own expression, the first acts of concupiscence, are not sinful. To support this opinion, they maintain, that nothing can be deemed a sin, but what is committed with the full bent of the will; and that when an unlawful object presents itself, how much soever the mind may be pleased with it, there is no sin till there is an actual compliance with it. For proof of this, they bring that scripture: 'When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin,'<sup>q</sup> which they interpret to mean that the second act of concupiscence, or the compliance with the first sugges-

<sup>k</sup> Psal. lviii. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Jer. xiii. 23.

<sup>m</sup> Psal. lxxxii. 5.

<sup>n</sup> The Marcionites in the second century, and the Manichees in the third.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12.

<sup>p</sup> See page 358—362.

<sup>q</sup> James i. 15

tions to sin, alone is denominated sin. As a consequence from this supposition, they pretend that these first acts of concupiscence were not inconsistent with a state of innocency; so that when 'Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise,' she did not sin till 'she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.'<sup>r</sup> As a farther consequence deduced from their supposition, they conclude, that the original righteousness which our first parents had, did not consist so much in a perfect freedom from all suggestions to sin, but rather in being a bridle to restrain them from compliance with them, by not making a right use of which, they complied with the motions of concupiscence, and so sinned. According to this scheme, that propensity of nature to sin which we have in our childhood, is an harmless and innocent thing; and therefore we may suppose it to be from God, without concluding him to be the author of sin. The scheme, however, is a vile and groundless notion, and such as savours more of Antinomianism than many doctrines that are so called. Indeed, it is to call that no sin which is, as it were, the root and spring of all sin, and to make God the author and approver of that which he cannot look on but with the utmost detestation, as being contrary to the holiness of his nature. We need not say more than this; for the notion carries the black marks of its own infamy in itself.

There are others who oppose the doctrine of original sin, and pretend to account for the corruption of nature, by supposing that all men sinned for themselves. This is nothing else but reviving an old opinion taken from the schools of Plato and Pythagoras, namely, that God created the souls of all men at first; that these before they were united to their bodies, at least those which now they have, sinned; and that, as a punishment of their crime in their former state, they were condemned not only to their respective bodies, but to suffer all the miseries to which they are exposed in them; so that the sin which they commit in these bodies, is nothing else but the farther propagation of that which had its rise in the acts of the understanding and will, when they first fell into a state of sin. This is so chimerical an opinion, that I would not have mentioned it, were it not maintained by some of those who deny original sin, as an expedient to account for the corruption of nature, and affirmed with an assurance as if it were founded in scripture. I cannot think, however, that it has the least countenance from it. They first take for granted, without sufficient ground, that those scriptures which speak of the pre-existence of Christ in his divine nature, are to be understood concerning the pre-existence of his soul; and thence they infer, that it is reasonable to suppose that the souls of other men pre-existed likewise. They also strain the sense of two or three other scriptures to prove it. When it is said, that, when God had laid the foundation of the earth, 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,'<sup>s</sup> they understand by 'the morning stars,' as others do, the angels, and, by 'the sons of God,' they suppose is meant the souls of men which were then created, and untainted with sin. To gain farther countenance to their opinion, they explain agreeably to it, what is said in a following verse,<sup>t</sup> where, when God had continued the account which he gives of his having created the world, he adds, 'Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?' These words they render, 'Knowest thou that thou wast then born, and that the number of thy days are many?' or they depend upon the translation which the LXX. give of the text, 'I know that thou wast then born, for the number of thy days are many;' that is, say they, 'Thou wast then existent; for though thou knowest not what thou didst from that time till thou camest into the world, yet the number of thy days are great; that is, thou hadst an existence many ages before.' How easy a matter is it for persons to strain the sense of some words of scripture, contrary to its general scope and design, in order to serve a purpose, when they attempt to gain countenance to any doctrine of their own invention! As to the scriptures which they bring to prove that the Jews were of their opinion, I will not deny the inference thence, that some of them were. This appears from the report which the disciples gave to our Saviour, when he

<sup>r</sup> Gen. iii. 6.<sup>s</sup> Job xxxviii. 7.<sup>t</sup> Verse 21.



asked them, 'Whom do men say that I am?' They replied, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets ;'<sup>y</sup> that is, they judged, according to the Pythagorean hypothesis, that the soul of Jeremias, or of one of the prophets, dwelt in that body which he had, and therefore that he was one of them. Again, our Saviour's disciples, speaking concerning the blind man, asked him, 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind ?'<sup>z</sup> that is, 'Was it as a punishment for some sin which this man's soul committed before it entered into the body to which it is united, that he was born blind ?' I say, I will not deny that some of the Jews may, from these scriptures, be supposed to have adopted the fabulous notion in question, agreeably to the sentiments of the philosophy with which they had been conversant. But I will not allow that our Saviour's not confuting the opinion, is an intimation, as its defenders generally conclude it to be, that he reckoned it just. I rather think that he passed it over as a vulgar error, not worthy of his confutation. As to the passage which they quote from the apocryphal book of Wisdom, where one is represented as saying, that 'because he was good, he came into a body undefiled ;' it is no proof from scripture, and it proves only that this was the opinion of some of that trifling generation of men. Moreover, the fact that it was maintained by some of the Fathers, who received the notion from the heathen philosophy, is also as little to the purpose. Indeed, all the other arguments which they bring, amount to nothing else but this, that, if the scripture had not given us ground to establish the contrary doctrine, there might have been at least a possibility of the truth of the opinion. But to lay this as a foundation for asserting the truth of it, with a view to account for the origin of man's sinfulness, is nothing else but for men to set up their own fancies, without sufficient ground, as matters of faith, and to build doctrines upon them as if they were contained in scripture. I pass by other improvements which they make on this fabulous notion, which appear to be still more romantic.<sup>y</sup>

There is another attempt to account for the origin of moral evil, without inferring God to be the author of it. This has been advanced by those who deny the imputation of Adam's sin. They suppose that the soul is polluted by the tradition or propagation of sin from the soul of the immediate parent ; so that, in the same manner as the body is subject to hereditary diseases, the soul is defiled with sin, both the one and the other being the consequence of their formation, according to the course of nature, in the likeness of those from whom they immediately derive their being. They suppose also that a similitude of passions and natural dispositions in parents and children, is an argument to evince the truth of their opinion. But it appears so contrary to the light of nature, and to all the principles of philosophy, to suppose that one spirit can produce another in a natural way, and so repugnant to the ideas which we have of spirits, as simple beings, or not compounded of parts, as bodies are, that it seems to be almost universally exploded, as being destitute of any tolerable argument to support it, though it was formerly embraced by some of the Fathers.<sup>z</sup> They who pretend to account for it, by the similitude of one candle's lighting another, while the flame remains the same that it was before, only make use of an unhappy method of illustration, which comes far short of a conclusive argument to their purpose. As to the likeness of natural dispositions in children to their parents, it does not, in the least, prove the opinion ; for this arises very much from the temperament of the body, or from the prejudices of education. But as this method of accounting for the origin of moral evil, is not much defended at present, we may pass it over as a groundless conjecture.

As for Arminius and his followers, they have very much insisted on a supposition, which they have advanced, that the universal corruption of human nature arises only from imitation. Now, though I will not deny that the progress and increase of sin, in particular persons, may be very much owing to the pernicious example of others with whom they are conversant ; yet it seems very absurd to

<sup>y</sup> u Matt. xvi. 13, 14.

<sup>x</sup> John ix. 2.

<sup>y</sup> See a book, supposed to be written in defence of it, by Glanvil, entitled, 'Lux Orientalis.'

<sup>z</sup> Tertullian was of this opinion [Vid. ejusd. de Anima]. Augustin, also, though he sometimes appears to adopt the opinion of the tradition of the soul, is at other times in great doubt about it, and ready to give it up as an indefensible opinion.—Vid. Aug. de Orig. Anim. et in Gen. ad lit. lib. x.

assign this, as the first reason of the corruption of their nature. It may easily be observed, that this corruption or disposition to sin, is visible in children, before they are capable of being drawn aside by the influence of bad examples. Indeed, their being corrupted thereby, is rather the effect than the cause of the first propensity which there is in nature to sin. It would soon appear, that, if they never saw any thing but what is excellent, or worthy to be imitated, in those under whose care they are, they would, notwithstanding, discover themselves prone to the contrary vices. We may, in fact, as well suppose that wisdom or holiness takes its rise from imitation in a natural way, as that sin or folly does so. Yet nothing is more common than for children to be very much degenerated from their parents. Whatever attempts are used to instil principles of virtue into them, are nothing else but a striving against the stream of corrupt nature, unless the grace of God interpose, and do that which imitation can never be the cause of.

We must, therefore, take some other method to account for man's corruption of nature; and must, at the same time, maintain that the soul is from God by immediate creation. Though the latter doctrine is not so plainly taught in scripture as other articles of faith are, yet scripture seems not to be wholly silent respecting it. God says, 'Behold, all souls are mine;'<sup>a</sup> and elsewhere, which is more express to the purpose, he speaks of 'the souls that he made,'<sup>b</sup> or created. The apostle, for this reason, styles him, 'the Father of spirits';<sup>c</sup> and that in such a sense as is opposed to 'the fathers of our flesh.' Taking this for granted, therefore, the difficulty which will recur upon us, and which we are to account for, is, How can the soul that comes out of God's immediate hand be the subject of moral evil? To assert that it is created guilty of Adam's first sin, or under an obligation to suffer that degree of punishment which is due to it, is not inconsistent with the divine perfections, as will farther appear, when, under a following Head, we consider what this punishment is; but to suppose that it is created by God impure, or with an inclination or propensity to sin, cannot well be reconciled with the holiness of God. This has been acknowledged by most divines to be one of the greatest difficulties which occur in the whole scheme of divinity. Some, with a becoming and religious modesty, have confessed their inability to account for it; and advise us rather to bewail our sinfulness and strive against it, than to be too inquisitive about the origin and cause of it. Indeed, this is far better than either to darken counsel by words without knowledge, or to advance what we cannot prove; and I would choose rather to acquiesce in this humble ignorance of it, than to assert any thing which contains the least insinuation of God's being the author of it. It is certain, there are many things which we know to be true, though we cannot account for the manner of their being what they are, and are at a loss to determine their origin or natural cause. Thus, though we are sure that the body is united to the soul, which acts by it, yet it is very hard to determine by what bands they are united, or how the soul moves the body as its instrument in acting. Moreover, we know that the particles of matter are united to one another; but it is difficult to determine what is the cause of their union. So if we inquire into the reason of the different colour or shape of herbs and plants, or why the grass is green, and not white or red, no one would be blamed if he should acknowledge himself to be at a loss to account for these and other things of a similar nature. The same may be said if we should confess that we are at a loss to determine what is the first rise of the propensity of the nature of man to sin. Yet, if we keep within the bounds of modesty in our inquiries, and advance nothing contrary to the divine perfections, we may safely, and with some advantage to the doctrine of original sin, say something on the subject, and may hereby remove the objections that are brought by some against it. Various ways have been taken, as was before observed, to account for the origin of moral evil, which we cannot acquiesce in, on account of the many absurdities which attend them. It may hence be more excusable for me to offer my humble thoughts on this subject; and I hope I shall not deviate much from the sentiments of many who have judiciously and happily maintained the doctrine. There is, indeed, one conjecture which I meet with, in a learned and judicious

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xviii. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. lvii. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. xii. 9.



divine, which differs very much from any account which we have of it by any other,<sup>d</sup> namely, that the mother, while the child is in the womb, having a sinful thought, impresses it on its soul, whereby it becomes polluted, in the same manner as its body is sometimes marked by the strength of her imagination. But this opinion is so very improbable, that it will hardly gain any proselytes; and it only discovers how willing some persons are to solve this difficulty, though in an uncommon method, as being apprehensive that others have not sufficiently done it.

That we may account for the matter in the most unexceptionable way, and in one which does not, in the least, infer God to be the author of sin, or overthrow the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, we must consider men's propensity of nature or the inclination of their souls to sin, as a corrupt habit, and consequently, as what is not infused by God. Hence, though the soul, in its first creation, is guilty, that is, liable to suffer the punishment due to it for Adam's sin imputed, yet it does not come defiled out of the hands of God; or, as one well expresses it,<sup>e</sup> "We are not to think that God put original sin into men's souls; for how should he punish those souls which he himself had corrupted?" He adds, that "it is a great wickedness to believe that God put into the soul an inclination to sin; though it is true God creates the souls of men destitute of heavenly gifts and supernatural light, and that justly, because Adam lost those gifts for himself and his posterity." Another judicious divine<sup>f</sup> expresses himself to the effect, that, though the soul is created spotless, yet, as a punishment of Adam's first sin, it is destitute of original righteousness. Accordingly he distinguishes between a soul's being pure, as the soul of Adam was when it was created, that is to say, not only sinless, but having habits or inclinations in its nature which inclined it to what was good; and its being created with a propensity or inclination to evil, which he, with good reason, denies. As a medium in which the truth lies between these extremes, he observes, that the soul is created by God, destitute of original righteousness, unable to do what is truly good, and yet having no positive inclination or propensity in nature to what is evil. This is plainly the sense of his words, which I have appended in a note.

Now, if it be inquired, how this corrupt habit or inclination to sin is contracted, we reply that the corruption of nature necessarily ensues on the privation of original righteousness. Some have illustrated this by an apt similitude, taken from the traveller's wandering out of his way, or taking a wrong path, in consequence of the darkness of the night. Here his want of light is the occasion, though not properly the cause, of his wandering. So, as the consequence of man's being destitute of original righteousness, or of those habits of supernatural grace which are implanted in regeneration, his actions, as soon as he is capable of doing good or evil, must contain nothing less than a sin of omission, or a defect of and disinclination to what is good. By this means, the soul becomes defiled, or inclined to sin. We suppose that it is indisposed to what is good, and that this

<sup>d</sup> Vid. Pictet. Theol. Chr. lib. v. cap. 7. Absit ut animam creari impuram dicamus, cum nihil impurum e Dei manibus prodire possit.—Dum infans est in utero matris, cum intime ei conjungatur, objecta in ejus cerebrum easdem impressiones efficiunt, ac in matris cerebrum.—Hoc patet ex eo quod contingit mulieribus prægnantibus; cum enim avidè inspicunt aliquid, vel rubro, vel flavo colore, vel pallido tinctum, contingit sæpiissime ut infantes quos in utero gestant, tali colore tincti nascantur. Ita intime corpus et animam uniri, ut ad motum corporis, certæ oriuntur in mente cogitationes.—Motus, qui fiunt in cerebro infantium, idem præstare in illis, ac in matribus, nempe eorum animam recens creatam rebus sensibilibus et carnalibus alligare; unde videmus infantium animas omnia ad se et ad suum referre corpus.

<sup>e</sup> See Du Moulin's Anatomy of Arminianism, chap. x. § 3, 15, 17.

<sup>f</sup> See Turret. Instit. Theol. Elenct. Tom. I. Loc. 9. Q. 12. § 8, 9. Licet anima sine ulla labe creetur a Deo, non creatur tamen cum justitia originali, qualis anima Adami, ad imaginem Dei; sed cum ejus carentia in pœnam primi peccati. Ut hic distinguendum sit inter animam puram, impuram, et non puram. Illa pura dicitur, quæ ornata est habitu sanctitatis; impura, quæ contrarium habitum injustitiæ habet; non pura, quæ licet nullum habeat habitum bonum, nullum tamen habet malum, sed creatur simpliciter cum facultatibus naturalibus; qualis supponitur creari a Deo post lapsum, sed imago Dei amissa semel per peccatum, non potest amplius restitui, nisi regenerationis beneficio per Spiritum Sanctum. Quamvis autem animæ creentur a Deo destitutæ justitiæ originali; non propterea Deus potest censi author peccati, quia aliud est impuritatem infundere, aliud puritatem non dare, quia homo se indignum reddidit in Adamo.

arises from its being destitute of supernatural grace, which it lost by Adam's fall. We suppose also, that God may deny this grace, without being the author of sin, since he was not obliged to continue that to Adam's posterity which Adam forfeited and lost for them. What follows is, that the heart of man, by a continuance in sin, after it is first tinctured with it, grows worse and worse, and becomes more inclined to it than before. This I cannot better illustrate, than by comparing it to a drop of poison, injected into the veins of a man, which will by degrees corrupt the whole mass of blood. As to what concerns the body to which the soul is united, giving occasion to corrupt habits being contracted, some have compared it to sweet oil being infected by a musty vessel into which it is put. The soul, created good, and put into a corrupt body, receives contagion from it; and this conjunction of the pure soul with a corrupt body, is a just punishment of Adam's sin. In this manner, a very learned and excellent divine accounts for the matter.<sup>g</sup> This similitude, indeed, does not illustrate it in every circumstance, inasmuch as that tincture which is received from a vessel in a physical way, cannot well correspond with the corruption of the soul, which is of a moral nature; yet I would make so much use of it as to observe, what daily experience suggests, that the constitution or temperament of the body has a very great influence on the soul, and is an occasion of various inclinations to sin, in which respect it acts in an objective way. When we suppose that a soul is united to a body which, according to the frame and constitution of its nature, has a tendency to incline it to sin, and that this soul is deprived of those supernatural habits which would have protected it against contagion; what can follow, but that corruption of nature whereby men are inclined to what is evil? The inclination thus formed increases daily, till men acquire the most rooted habits and dispositions to all that is bad, and they are with corresponding difficulty reclaimed from it.

*The Conveyance of Original Sin by Natural Generation.*

We shall now consider the conveyance of original sin from our first parents to their posterity by natural generation, or how we are said to be born in sin. It is not the sin of our immediate parents which is imputed to us; for they stand in the relation, not of federal, but of natural heads of their posterity. The meaning of the Answer in which this doctrine is stated is only this, that original sin is conveyed to us by our immediate parents with our being, so that as we are born men, we are born sinners. Now, that we may consider this in consistency with what was formerly laid down, nothing can be inferred from it but that the guilt of Adam's first sin is conveyed to us with our being, and that the habitual inclination that we have to sin, and which we call a propensity of nature, is the consequence. Hence, what our Saviour says is a great truth, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh';<sup>h</sup> or every one that is born of sinful parents will, as soon as he is capable of sin, be prone to commit it.

This leads us to consider an objection against what has been laid down in explaining this doctrine, that it is inconsistent with the sense of several scriptures which speak of sin as derived from our immediate parents. For understanding this in general, let it be considered that no sense of any scripture is true which casts the least reflection on the divine perfections. If we could but prove that our souls are propagated by our immediate parents, as our bodies are, there would be no difficulty in allowing the sense which the objectors give of several scriptures whence they attempt to account for the corruption of nature in a different way from what we do; for, in that case, God would not be the author of that corruption. But, supposing the soul to be created by God, we must take some other method to account for the sense of some scriptures which are brought in opposition to the explanation we have given of the origin of moral evil.

The first scripture which is generally brought against it is, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.'<sup>i</sup> But the meaning of this is as if it had been said, 'I was conceived and born guilty of sin, with an inability



to do what is good, and in such a state that actual sin would necessarily follow as soon as I was capable of committing it, and would bring with it a propensity to all manner of sin.' That David had a sense of guilt, as well as of pollution of nature, is plain from several places of the context, especially from the ninth and fourteenth verses of the psalm. His words, therefore, are as if he had said, 'I was a guilty creature as soon as I was conceived in the womb, and left of God, and so sin has the ascendant over me. I was conceived a sinner by imputation, under the guilt of Adam's first sin; and I have added much guilt, and lately that of blood-guiltiness.' Hence, though he is said to have been 'shapen in iniquity,' it does not necessarily follow that his soul was created with infused habits of sin. Whatever the parents are the cause of, with respect to this corruption and pollution, let it be attributed to them; but far be it from us to say that God is the cause. Again, it is said, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.'<sup>k</sup> Now, it is no strain upon the sense of this text to suppose that, by 'unclean,' Job means guilty; and by 'cleanness,' innocence, as opposed to guilt. In most places of the book of Job, it is so taken, that is, in a forensic sense; and why not in this? If so, it is not at all inconsistent with our explanation of the doctrine. When Job says, in the fourth verse of the eleventh chapter, 'I am clean in thine eyes,' the meaning is, 'I am guiltless,' otherwise Zophar's reply to him would not have been so just, 'God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.' Again, when he says, 'What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?'<sup>l</sup> to be 'righteous,' seems to be exegetical of being 'clean;' and both, when understood in a forensic sense, agree well with what Job is often reproved for by his friends, namely, boasting too much of his righteousness, or cleanness. Thus he says, 'I am clean without transgression; neither is there iniquity in me;'<sup>m</sup> that is, 'I am not so guilty as to deserve such a punishment as he inflicts.' Surely 'cleanness' here is the same with innocence, as opposed to guilt. Again, when he says, 'If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean,'<sup>n</sup> he plainly implies, that if he should pretend himself guiltless, yet he could not answer the charge which God would bring against him, neither could they 'come together in judgment.'<sup>o</sup> Now, if this be so frequently, if not always, the sense of 'clean' in other places of this book, why may not we take the sense of the words, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' to be, that a guilty child is born of a guilty parent, and that its being guilty will be accompanied with uncleanness, so that it will be prone to sin, as soon as it is capable of committing it?

Another scripture which we bring to prove original sin, is Gen. vi. 5, 'Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man is only evil continually.' Now, why may we not understand it to mean that the imagination of the thoughts are evil, as soon as there are imaginations or thoughts, though not before? This respects rather the corruption of nature than the origin of it; and so does the parallel scripture, 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth,'<sup>p</sup> which means that sin increases with the exercise of reason. This passage also, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies,'<sup>q</sup> agrees well enough with what we have said concerning their separation from God, from the womb, whence arises actual sin; so that they 'speak lies' as soon as they are capable of doing so. There is another scripture, usually brought to prove original sin, which is to be understood in a sense not much unlike that now mentioned, 'Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb.'<sup>r</sup> This does not overthrow what we have said; for a person may be a transgressor, as it were, from the womb, and yet the soul not have a propensity to sin implanted in it by God in its creation. Again, it is said, 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness,'<sup>s</sup> that is, a fallen creature, involved in guilt, and liable to the curse, like himself, and one who would be like him in actual sin, when capable of it,—born in 'his image,' as having lost 'the divine image.' Farther, it is said, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.'<sup>t</sup> We may understand this to mean, that every one who is born of sinful

<sup>k</sup> Job xiv. 4.  
<sup>p</sup> Gen. viii. 21.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. xv. 14.  
<sup>q</sup> Psal. lviii. 3.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. xxxiii. 9.  
<sup>r</sup> Isa. xlviii. 8.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. ix. 30.  
<sup>s</sup> Gen. v. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Ver. 32.  
<sup>t</sup> John iii. 6.

parents, is a sinner, destitute of the Spirit of God ; and this is a great truth. But surely our Saviour did not design hereby to signify, that any one is framed by God with a propensity to sin ; which is all that, in this section, we oppose.

*The Connection of Actual Transgression with Original Sin.*

The last thing to be considered is, that all actual transgressions proceed from original sin. These are like so many streams which flow from this fountain of corruption. The one discovers to us what we are by nature ; the other, what we are by practice ; and both afford us matter for repentance and great humiliation, in the sight of God. But as we shall have occasion under some following Answers,<sup>u</sup> to enlarge on that part of this subject which more especially relates to actual transgressions, with their respective aggravations, we pass it over at present ; and shall conclude this Head with some practical inferences from what has been said, concerning the corruption of our nature, as being the spring of all actual transgressions.

1. We ought to make a due distinction between the first discoveries there are of this corruption of our nature in our infancy, and that which arises from a course or progress in sin. The latter has certainly greater aggravations than the former, and is like a spark of fire blown up into a flame. Accordingly, it is our duty, as the apostle says, ‘to exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day ; lest any be hardened,’ that is, lest this corruption of nature be increased, ‘through the deceitfulness of sin.’<sup>x</sup>

2. Let us carefully distinguish between our being born innocent, which the Pelagians affirm and we deny, and our being born defiled with sin, and so having a propensity of nature to it as soon as we have a being. Let us more especially take heed that we do not charge this on God, as though he were the author of it, as well as of our being, or as if it were infused by him, and not acquired by us.

3. Since this corruption of nature so early discovers itself, and abides in us as long as we are in this world, let us take heed that we do not use means to increase it, by giving way to presumptuous sins, or endeavour to excite it or draw it forth, either in ourselves or others ; for this will occasion abundance of actual transgressions.

## THE PUNISHMENT CONSEQUENT ON ORIGINAL SIN.

QUESTION XXVII. *What misery did the fall bring upon mankind ?*

ANSWER. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so as we are, by nature, children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

HAVING considered that guilt which we bring with us into the world, and that corruption of nature which discovers itself as soon as we appear to be intelligent creatures, or are capable of any disposition to sin, we proceed to speak concerning the misery and punishment which follow. Now, as original sin is equal in all ; and as inherent corruption increases in proportion to that degree of obstinacy and hardness of heart which discovers itself in all ages and conditions of life, and is attended with greater guilt, being more deeply rooted in us, and gaining very great strength by actual sin ; it is necessary for us to consider the punishment due to original sin, as such, and how it differs from a greater degree of punishment as due to increasing guilt. The former is not distinguished from the latter, by many who treat on this subject ; which gives occasion to some who deny original sin, to represent it in a most terrible view, as though there were no difference between the wrath of God to which infants are exposed, and that which is inflicted on the most obdurate sinner. That we may remove prejudices against this doctrine, and set it

<sup>u</sup> See vol. ii. Quest. cv.—cli.

<sup>x</sup> Heb. iii. 13.



in a just light, we shall consider the punishment due to original sin, both as regards itself, and as regards its connection with actual transgression.

*The Condition of those who Die in Infancy.*

Let us consider the punishment due to original sin, as such, namely, in those who are charged with no other guilt than that of Adam's first sin. This more especially respects those who die in their infancy, before they are capable of making any addition to it. Concerning these, I cannot but conclude with Augustin, in his defence of original sin against the Pelagians, that the punishment is the most mild of any, and cannot be reckoned so great that it may be said of them, 'It had been better for them not to have been born.'<sup>y</sup>

That this may appear, let it be considered, that the punishment due to actual sin, or the corruption of nature increased thereby, is attended with accusations of conscience, inasmuch as the guilt which is contracted by it arises from the opposition of the will to God. The alienation of the affections from him is often attended with rebellion against a great degree of light, and with many other aggravations arising from the engagements which we are under to the contrary; and is persisted in with obstinacy, against all checks of conscience, and means used to prevent it. Now, in proportion to the degree of it, they who contract its guilt are said, as our Saviour speaks of the Scribes and Pharisees, to be liable to 'the greater damnation.'<sup>z</sup> The prophet Jeremiah speaks of some of the greatest opposers of his message, as those who should be destroyed with 'double destruction.'<sup>a</sup> This is certainly a greater degree of punishment than that which is due to original sin, as such. With respect also to those who are liable to it, there are often many sad instances of the wrath of God breaking in upon the conscience. He says by the psalmist, that he would 'reprove them, and set their iniquities in order before their eyes';<sup>b</sup> and what our Saviour says concerning the 'worm that dieth not,'<sup>c</sup> is to be applied to them. This punishment, however, does not belong to those who have no other guilt than that of Adam's sin imputed to them.

If we can make this appear, as I hope we shall be able to do, it may have a tendency to remove some prejudices which many entertain against the doctrine of original sin, who express themselves with an air of insult as if they were opposing a doctrine which is contrary to the dictates of human nature, as well as represents God as exercising the greatest severity against those who are chargeable with no other sin than this. They generally lay hold of some unwary expressions, contributing very little to the defence of this doctrine, which might as well have been spared. These expressions are no less exceptionable, that the persons who use them preface them with an apology for the want of pity which they evince, and say that the milder thoughts of others on the subject will do those infants who are tormented in hell no good, as their severer ones can do them no prejudice. We may, therefore, be allowed to make a farther inquiry into this matter; especially when we consider, that those who die in infancy will appear at the last day to have been a very considerable part of mankind. Some tender parents also have had a due concern of spirit about their future state; and would be very glad, were it possible for them, to have some hopes concerning their happiness.

Various have been the conjectures of divines about infant salvation. The Pelagians, and those who verge towards their scheme, have concluded that they are all saved; supposing that they are innocent, and not in the least concerned in Adam's sin. This, however, is to set aside the doctrine we are maintaining; and I cannot think their reasoning very conclusive. Others, who do not deny original sin, suppose, notwithstanding, that the guilt of it is atoned for by the blood of Christ. This would be a very agreeable notion, could it be proved; and all that I shall say in answer to it is, that it wants confirmation. As for those who suppose, with

<sup>y</sup> See Aug. contra Julianum, lib. v. cap. 8. Ego non dico, parvulos sine baptismo Christi morientes tanta pena esse plectendos; ut eis non nasci potius expediret. Et ejusd. de peccat. merit. et remiss. lib. i. cap. 16. Potest proinde recte dici, parvulos sine baptismo de corpore exeuntes, in damnatione omnium mitissima futuros.

<sup>z</sup> Matt. xxiii. 14.

<sup>a</sup> Jer. xvii. 18.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. l. 21.

<sup>c</sup> Mark ix. 44.

the Papists, that the guilt of original sin is washed away by baptism, as some of the Fathers also have asserted, their opinion has so many absurd consequences, that I need not spend time in opposing it. One of them is, that it makes that which, at most, is but a sign or ordinance for our faith, in the use of which we hope for the grace of regeneration, to be the natural means of conferring that grace. But this is contrary to the design of all the ordinances which God has appointed. Others have concluded that all the infants of believing parents, dying in infancy, are saved; supposing that they are interested in the covenant of grace, in which God promises that he will be a God to believers and their seed. This would be a very comfortable thought to those who have hope concerning their own state. I cannot find, however, that the argument in support of it is sufficiently maintained; for it seems very evident, that all such promises respect rather the external than the saving blessings of the covenant of grace. Others, therefore, who are good and pious Christians, and who have been enabled by an act of faith in which they have enjoyed some sensible experience of the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, to give up their infant-seed to Christ, whether in baptism or not, have concluded from the frame of their own spirit, and the evidence they have had of the power of God exciting their act of faith, that God will own that grace which he had enabled them to exercise, and that he has accepted of their solemn act of dedication of their infants to him. This mode of reasoning has given them comfortable and quieting thoughts about the salvation of their infant-seed, and it is not only excellent in itself, but seems to be as just a way of reasoning about the salvation of those who die in infancy, as any that is generally made use of. Perhaps from some such method as this, David inferred the salvation of his child, when he said, 'I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me.'<sup>d</sup> But as these are uncommon instances of faith, and such as every sincere Christian has not always been found in the exercise of, I would hope that there are multitudes of infants saved, concerning whom we have no certain ground to determine who they are. Why, too, may not we suppose that there are many of them, belonging to the election of grace, who are not the seed of believing parents? Yet, notwithstanding all the pious and kind thoughts which the conjectures of men suggest, we must be content to leave this, as a secret that belongs to God, and not unto us to know.

All that I shall attempt, at present, is to prove, that if all who die in their infancy are not saved, their condemnation is not like that which is due to actual sin, or to those habits of it which are contracted by men. Here it must be allowed, pursuant to our former reasoning, that if they are not saved, they have the punishment of loss inflicted on them; for the right to the heavenly blessedness which Adam forfeited and lost, respected not only himself but all his posterity. Whether they have any farther degree of punishment inflicted on them, or how far they are liable to the punishment of sense, I dare not pretend to determine. I am not willing to conclude, with some of the Remonstrants, such as Episcopius, Curcellæus, and others, that they always remain in an infantile state, or that they have no more ideas in the other world than they had in this; for this is to suppose what cannot be proved. Besides, if they always remain in this state, their doing so must be supposed either to be the consequence of nature, and must be argued from their want of ideas while they were in this world; or it must be by a particular dispensation of providence respecting some infants in the next world, and not all. To suppose the former, is to suppose that none are saved, since remaining in an infantile state is not salvation; for it is beyond dispute, that the soul which is saved, whether it went out of the world an infant or a man, is exceedingly enlarged, and rendered receptive of the heavenly blessedness. If, on the other hand, they suppose, that their remaining in an infantile state, is by a particular dispensation of providence, this, were it true, would be a small punishment, indeed, inflicted on them for Adam's sin. But we have as little or less ground to conclude this, than that all infants are saved. I cannot, therefore, adopt this notion. Indeed, it differs little from that of the Papists, who suppose them, if dying unbaptized, to remain in a state of insensibility; which is no other than an ungrounded conjecture



The account, also, which we have, in some of their writings, concerning the place allotted for infants, which they call 'Limbus Infantium,' and suppose to be situated between heaven and hell, is no better than a theological romance, and cannot but be reckoned trifling and ludicrous, and nothing else but an imposing of their own fancies as an article of faith.

I dare not, indeed, allow myself to be too peremptory, or give my thoughts too great a loose, on this subject. But while it is taken for granted by all who believe the doctrine of original sin, that infants, if not saved, are liable to the punishment of loss, which has been already considered as the immediate consequence of the imputation of Adam's sin; it doth not appear to me that they have such a tormenting sense of the greatness of their loss, as others have who were adult, and had received the knowledge of divine things of which infants are not capable. The latter, as is more than probable, carry the ideas which they had received of divine things out of the world with them which infants cannot be said to do. Hence, if ever infants have the knowledge of divine things, and consequently of the glory of the heavenly state, it must be by extraordinary revelation. How far they may be led into this matter, by observing the glorious work which shall be performed, in the most visible manner, in the day of judgment, I pretend not to determine. This, indeed, will give them some apprehensions of the happiness which others are possessed of, and they are excluded from. But even this cannot have a tendency to enhance their misery to so great a degree as that of hardened and presumptuous sinners, who have despised and neglected the means of grace. The latter, as our Saviour says to the Jews, shall 'see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, while they themselves are thrust out;'\* that is, their seeing the heavenly glory will, in a judicial way, be a means to enhance their misery. They will necessarily have such a tormenting sense of their having neglected that glory, as will make their loss appear greater, and so render them more miserable than infants can be, who never had the means of grace in this world.

But as it is not safe to be too peremptory on this subject, all that I shall farther observe is, that whatever conceptions infants may have of the happiness which they are not possessed of, they shall not have that part of the punishment of sin which consists in self-reflection on the dishonour that they have brought to God, or the various aggravations of sin committed, which is a very great degree of the punishment of sin in hell. The wrath of God breaking in on the consciences of men, whereby, in a judicial way, actual sins which were committed, and means of grace which were neglected, are brought to remembrance, and occasion the greatest distress and misery,—this certainly is a punishment to which infants cannot be liable. Again, if the condition of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon is represented by our Saviour as more tolerable than that of Capernaum; so, in proportion, the condemnation of infants, who have no other guilt than that of original sin, will be more tolerable than that of the heathen, inasmuch as they had no natural capacities of doing good or evil. This is all that I pretend to determine; and the amount of it is, that, as punishment must be proportioned to crime, and as they are liable only to the guilt of Adam's sin, which is much less than being liable to it together with those other transgressions which proceed from it, their punishment must be less than that of any others. This, I think, may safely be asserted; and, if we proceed no farther in our inquiries about the matter, but confess our ignorance of many things relating to the state and capacity of separate souls, we shall be more excusable than if we pretended to a greater degree of knowledge than is consistent with our present state. [See Note 3 F, page 422.]

*Punishment due to Original Sin in Actual Transgressors.*

We shall now consider the punishment due to original sin, when attended with many actual sins, proceeding from a nature defiled and prone to rebel against God. This is greater or less, in proportion to the habits of sin contracted; as will be more particularly considered, when we speak of the aggravations of sin, and its

desert of punishment.<sup>f</sup> We shall, at present, speak on the subject in the order in which it is laid down in this Answer.

1. By the fall of our first parents all mankind lost communion with God. This was enjoyed at first ; for God having made man with faculties capable of this privilege, designed to converse with him. Indeed, this was one of the blessings promised in the covenant which he was under ; and it was a kind of prelibation of the heavenly state. It follows, therefore, that the fall of our first parents could not but expose first themselves, and then their posterity, to the loss of this privilege. Indeed, this was the more immediate result of sin committed, and of guilt thereby contracted. It is a reflection on the divine perfections, to suppose that God will have communion with sinners, while they remain in a state of rebellion against him ; or that he will love and manifest himself to them, and admit them into his presence as friends and favourites, unless there be a Mediator, who engages to repair the injury offered to the holiness and justice of God, and secure the glory of his perfections, in making reconciliation for sin, and thereby bringing them into a state of friendship with God. But this privilege man had no right to, or knowledge of, when he fell ; and consequently, God and man could not ‘walk together,’ as ‘not being agreed.’<sup>g</sup> God was obliged, in honour, to withdraw from him, and thereby testify his displeasure against sin ; as he tells his people, ‘Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.’<sup>h</sup> This consequence of sin is judicial. At the same time, through the corruption of nature, as the result of that enmity against God which follows on our fallen state, man is farther considered as not desiring to converse with God. His guilt inclined him to flee from him, as a sin-revenging Judge ; and his loss of God’s supernatural image, consisting in holiness of heart and life, rendered him disinclined, yea, averse to this privilege. As he was separate from the presence of God, he desired to have nothing more to do with him ; and this is the immediate result of his sinful and fallen state.

2. Man, by his fall, was exposed to the divine displeasure, or to the wrath of God. Accordingly, the apostle says, ‘We are by nature children of wrath.’<sup>i</sup> Here we are not to understand, as some do who deny the guilt and punishment of original sin, that nothing is intended but that we are inclined to wrath, or that we have those depraved and corrupt passions whereby we are prone to hate God and holiness, which is his image in man ; for this is rather the consequence of original sin, and discovers what we are by practice, whereas the text speaks of what we are ‘by nature.’ It seems also a very great strain and force on the sense of the words, to understand the phrase, ‘we are the children of wrath,’ as meaning that we are children of wrath only by custom, which, according to the proverbial expression, is a second nature ; or as signifying only the temper of men’s minds, or their behaviour towards one another, in giving way to their passions, ‘living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.’<sup>k</sup> According to the latter view, it would denote only the effects of the corruption of nature, not liability to the wrath of God due to it. Now it is plain that the apostle makes use of an Hebraism, very frequently occurring in scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament. As a person guilty of a capital crime, and liable to suffer death, is called ‘a son of death ;’ or as our Saviour calls Judas, who was liable to perdition, ‘a son of perdition ;’<sup>l</sup> so here ‘children of wrath’ are those who are liable to the wrath of God, or that punishment which is the demerit of sin. Not that wrath is a passion in God as it is in us ; but it signifies either his will to punish, or—designing to glorify his holiness—his actual inflicting of punishment on the guilty, in proportion to the crimes committed. Now, as all mankind come into the world with the guilt of the sin of our first parents, in which respect guilt denotes a liability to punishment, and all punishment contains some degree of wrath ; I say, if this be the meaning of their being guilty or liable to punishment by nature, I am far from denying it. The only thing which I have opposed is the supposition, that the punishment due to original sin imputed bears an equal proportion to that of guilt contracted, whereby the

<sup>f</sup> See vol. ii. Quest. cli. clii.

<sup>i</sup> Eph. ii. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Amos iii. 3.

<sup>k</sup> Tit. iii. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. lix. 2.

<sup>l</sup> John xvii. 12.



nature of man is rendered more depraved by a continuance in sin. I cannot, therefore, but acquiesce in the explanation of this matter given by the learned Beza, who is a most strenuous defender of the doctrine of original sin,<sup>m</sup> who, when he speaks of men as 'children of wrath, by nature,' all mankind being included, understands the phrase as referring, not to the human nature as created by God, but to that nature as corrupted by its compliance with the suggestions of Satan. We suppose, therefore, that as the corruption of nature is daily increased, whatever punishment is due to it at first, there is, notwithstanding, a greater condemnation to which it is exposed, as the consequence of sin committed and continued in. This is described, in scripture, in such a way as renders it, beyond expression, dreadful. 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.'<sup>n</sup> 'Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide, in the fierceness of his anger?'<sup>o</sup>

3. Man, as fallen, is exposed to the curse of God. This is an external declaration of his hatred of sin, and of his will to punish it; and is sometimes called the condemning sentence of the law. 'As many,' says the apostle, 'as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'<sup>p</sup> Whatever threatenings there are, by which God discovers his infinite hatred of sin, these we are all liable to, as the consequence of our fallen state. Accordingly, as we were at first separate from God, the sin of our nature tends, according to its various aggravations, to make the breach the wider, and our condemnation much greater.

4. By the fall we became bond-slaves to Satan. Thus it is said, that the devil hath 'the power of death.'<sup>q</sup> Sinners are described as 'walking according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.'<sup>r</sup> He is elsewhere described as a strong man armed, who keeps the palace, till a stronger than he shall overcome him, and take from him all his armour.<sup>s</sup> The heart of man is the throne in which he reigns, and men are naturally inclined to yield themselves slaves to him, and corrupt nature gives him the greatest advantage against us. None of us can say, as our Saviour did, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;'<sup>t</sup> for we are as ready to comply as he is to tempt, especially if not prevented by the grace of God, and therefore may well be said to be bond-slaves to him. No age or condition of life is exempted from his assaults. He suits his temptations to our natural tempers, and hereby we are overcome, and more and more enslaved by him. Now certainly this must be a state of misery; more especially because those who are subject to it are enemies to Christ, and withdraw themselves from his service, despising his protection, and the rewards he has promised to his faithful servants. Our Saviour says, that 'we cannot serve two masters;'<sup>u</sup> and so long as we continue bond-slaves to Satan, we contract greater guilt, and the dominion of sin increases. Hence, to be the servants of Satan, is to be the servants of sin. In this, too, are sinners miserable, that they serve one who intends nothing but their ruin, and is pleased in all the steps leading to it, and will be as ready to accuse, torment, and make them more miserable in the end, as he is to solicit or desire their service, or as they can be to obey him. Let us, therefore, use our utmost endeavours, that we may be free from this bondage and servitude. Accordingly let us consider, that Satan has no right to our service. Though he be permitted to rule over the children of disobedience, yet he has no divine grant or warrant for our service to render it lawful for him to demand it, or for us to yield it. He is no other than an usurper, and declared enemy to the King of heaven; and though sinners are suffered to give themselves up to him, this is far from being by divine approbation. Hence, let us professedly renounce, groan under, and endeavour, through the grace of God, to withdraw ourselves from his service, whenever we are led captive by

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Bez. in loc. Ubique ira est, ibi et peccatum; quo sine exceptione involvi totam humanam gentem idem testatur, Rom. i. 18. Sed naturam tamen intellige non quatenus creata est, verum quatenus per diaboli suggestionem corrupta est a seipsa.

<sup>n</sup> Psal. xc. 11.

<sup>o</sup> Nah. i. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Gal. iii. 10.

<sup>q</sup> Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>r</sup> Eph. ii. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Luke xi. 21, 22.

<sup>t</sup> John xiv. 30.

<sup>u</sup> Matt. vi. 24.

him; and not be his willing slaves, to obey him with our free consent, or out of choice, and with pleasure. In order to this, let us enlist ourselves into Christ's service, put ourselves under his protection, and desire his help, against the wiles and fiery darts of the devil. Let us improve the proclamation of liberty made in the gospel, and rejoice in it, as the most desirable blessing: 'If the Son make you free, then shall ye be free indeed.'<sup>x</sup>

The last thing observed in this Answer, is, that as fallen creatures, we are justly liable to all punishments in this world, and in that which is to come. By these we are to understand, the consequences, not only of original sin imputed to us, but of sin inherent in us, and increased by that guilt which we daily contract, and which exposes the sinner to punishment in both worlds, in proportion to its aggravations. This subject we are led to discuss under the two following Answers.

x John viii. 36.

[NOTE 3 F. *Infant-Salvation*.—Dr. Ridgeley's statements on the subject of infant-salvation are exceedingly conjectural and altogether unsatisfactory. So far as appears from his reasonings, all dying in infancy may be lost, or all may be saved. He elicits no data for the assured hope of the salvation of even one; and, while admitting or rather teaching that some are saved, he affords no criteria for discriminating between them and others, or for ascertaining what class they belong to, what characteristics they possess, in what circumstances they are found, or to what comparative numbers they amount. Now, though not much is said in scripture respecting infants as such, there are clearly revealed several great principles which distinctly apply to their condition and hopes. The Bible, while chiefly a revelation to man as the subject of moral government, and consequently occupied with prelection and appeal to the adult mind, is, at the same time, a revelation of the nature, objects, and results of the dispensation of sovereign mercy established over the whole of our race. Some light, therefore, if not in the form of direct or argumentative statement, at least in the form of great general principles, may be expected to beam from it on the condition of persons dying in infancy. To this light, and not to idle conjecture, or the still idler deductions of philosophizing or scholastic theology, ought to be all our appeal.

I cannot, within the compass of a short note, do more than sketch an outline of thought on the subject of infant-salvation. My statements must be so succinct, and so unenforced by illustration, as to make a particular demand upon a reader's attention, and upon his subsequent careful reflection. That he may not unnecessarily be startled by any of them, he is requested to observe that they all proceed on the assumption of the doctrines of original sin, sovereign grace, particular election, and Adamic and mediatorial representation.

A prefatory idea of some importance is, that whatever reason is assigned for the salvation of any dying in infancy, virtually infers the salvation of all. Infants, it must be remembered, have 'not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;' they sustain more a relative than a positive relation to the state of things under which man is placed; they are free from actual or personal sin, and are guilty and destitute of righteousness only by their connexion with Adam. They, in other words, possess not a personal but an aggregate character: they are distinguishable, in a moral point of view, not as individuals, but as a class. Hence, whatever consideration applies to the condition of one, applies to the condition of all. They are justly condemned in Adam, and, as subjects of original sin, may be dealt with by the divine equity. But they are free from the personal transgressions which form the ground of the proceedings of the divine equity toward adults. If, therefore, the representative work and righteousness of the Redeemer take effect on any of them, the principle on which they do so is such as to involve their taking effect on all. When divine sovereignty reigns to the salvation of some adults, and the passing by of others, a reason is found for the difference in positive rejection of the gospel, in willful blindness and idolatry, or in voluntary self-convicted commission of sin. But such a basis as this of the exercise of divine equity, superinduced on the manifestation of the divine grace, does not apply to the case of infants. The sins which free grace reigns to do away in adults are personal and individually characteristic, and are as varied in aggravations, number, and circumstantial properties as the persons in whom they are found; but the sin which free grace reigns to do away in any who die in infancy is, as to all its characteristics and as to even its very identity, the same in all the individuals of their class. Admit, then, any principle which involves the salvation of some dying in infancy, and you admit a principle which infers the salvation of all. Dr. Ridgeley appears to have had some remote view of this reasoning before his mind, and to have felt perplexed or stultified by its force. For, how else can we account for the extraordinary hypothesis which he commends—the only one, too, which is advanced in the course of his statements—to account for the salvation of some who die in infancy,—the hypothesis that parents have grace to make a special dedication of their offspring to the Lord, and that the Most High regards this grace of dedication as a reason for their offspring's salvation? Dr. Ridgeley clearly does not mean that the parental act is the ground of the infant's being saved: he no doubt ascribes the infant's salvation solely to the sovereign mercy of God reigning through the sacrificial righteousness of the Redeemer. But then he feels, that he has admitted a principle which infers the salvation of all who die in infancy,—a principle which applies, not to individuals, but to a class; and he, therefore, endeavours to find, in the dedicatory act of parents, a circumstance which will individualize the application of the principle, or limit it to a characteristic number. But all scripture, all propriety of thinking, appears to exclaim against his limiting hypothesis.



The amount of it is, that, in virtue of an act of dedication, any ordinary parents may become the moral and legal representatives of their offspring; that, by means of such an act, they have the power of swaying or determining their children's eternal destiny; and, the performing of the act being purely voluntary, that it is quite in their own choice to assume or not the supposed representative character, and to entail upon their offspring its results. Who does not see that every part of the hypothesis is worse than unwarrantable,—that it involves doctrines at war with the elementary truths of the gospel,—that, in particular, it contradicts the great pervading principle of divine dispensations toward man as to moral and legal representation—such representation as affects man's eternal well-being—being found only in the first Adam who was of the earth, earthy, and in the second Adam who is the Lord from heaven? Placing aside this hypothesis, then, Dr. Ridgeley, in assigning a reason for the salvation of some who die in infancy, assigns a reason which infers the salvation of all. Let the arguments of any other writer who teaches partial infant-salvation be examined; and, so far as they are sound, so far as they rest on any admitted principle of the scheme of mercy, they will be seen to lead to the same result.

Some light is thrown on the subject of infant-salvation by the character of the mediatorial dispensation. Sovereign favour, free mercy, saving love, is the basis on which the dispensation rests. Its object is to destroy sin, to destroy death, to destroy him that hath the power of death, and, in general, to counterwork the effects of the fall, and to bring peace on earth, good-will to man, and glory to God in the highest. But it does not force its boons on men; it does not compel their acceptance of its provisions; it does not operate upon them by a physical necessity, or irrespectively of suitable moral means: on the contrary, it appeals to their understandings; it deals with them as reasoning and personally responsible beings; it places the acceptance or refusal of salvation with themselves; it attaches the obligation of duty to the acceptance of it, and a special guilt and penalty to its rejection; and it thus assumes the character, employs the machinery, and works out the results of a moral administration. But who does not see that it does all this only as respects adults, or those of mankind who have the faculty of active understanding? All who die in infancy come short of the time and the circumstances in which its character and results as a moral administration are developed. Its machinery of moral means has no bearing upon them; and its entailment of obligation to believe and of penalty against unbelief does not apply to their condition. What follows, then, but that, as far as they are concerned, it maintains simply its fundamental character of a dispensation of sovereign mercy, of free favour, of saving love, of a divinely wise and effective scheme for neutralizing the effects of man's fall, and raising soul and body to immortal honour and glory?

Closely allied to this thought is another,—that the test of the gospel to the future condition of adults, has no applicability to the case of infants. 'He that believeth on the Son of God, hath life; and he that believeth not on the Son of God, hath not life,' are words which belong to the gospel-economy as a moral administration. Positive faith or positive unbelief decides the condition of every one who, having a capacity to understand, is under an obligation to believe. But infants, in the present life, can have neither positive faith, nor positive unbelief. No man can say regarding any one dying in infancy that it rejected any part of divine truth,—that it was, in any actual sense, an unbeliever. In its connexion with Adam, it was lost and dead. But Christ came 'to seek and to save that which was lost;' he 'destroyed death, and him that had the power of death.' To such a people as the Jews who lived under his own public ministry, he says, 'How often would I have gathered you, but ye would not.' To even the brutalized and savage heathen, he says, 'When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; and as many as sinned without law, shall also perish without law, the work of the law being written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' But what shall he say to those who die in infancy? The test of condition, the reason for giving over to punishment, the rule of giving or withholding the blessings of redemption, which applies to hearers of the gospel, to heathens, to the participants of present or of traditional revelation, to rational adults of any class, does not apply to them. What inference, then, is to be drawn but that those who die in infancy are among the lost whom Christ came to save, the dead whom he came to make alive?

Another principle which throws light on infant-salvation, is the rule of decision at the final judgment. I need not quote texts to show that this rule is actual personal character, evinced or exhibited in conduct. To persons acquainted with scripture, not a few texts will occur which identify the process of final judgment with a process of deciding according to men's works,—according to their deeds done in the body. Whatever the rule of judgment is spoken of, it is stated to be positive character, the result of wilful sinning in the wicked, and the result of renovating, active grace in the redeemed. Now, either this rule is utterly inapplicable to such as die in infancy, or it can become applicable to them only in connexion with the economy of salvation. They neither have nor are capable of having positive character as the result of wilful or personal sinning; and if they can have positive character at all, it must be as the result of renovating influence on their soul, and the implantation within them of the principles of active holiness. I do not say that they enjoy renovating influence before they die—I do not say that they receive it in the act of transition from the present life—I do not pretend to conjecture either when or how it is imparted to them; I state only that it, in any sense, they shall, as subjects of the final judgment, possess the elements of positive personal character, it must necessarily be, not in the way of having committed actual sin, but in the way of having been subjects of the implantation of principles of holiness by the renovating influence of heavenly grace. My argument, however, requires, not that they should be, in some sense, regarded as having personal character, but simply that they should be viewed as necessarily destitute of the character which results from actual sinning,—that character which will be the rule of judgment for condemnation. No one will say, no one can imagine, that, in any sense, they have that character. What follows, then, but that they will not be condemned,—

that, free from personal sins, they have been made free also from original sin through the blood of the everlasting covenant,—and that they shall class with those whose 'names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world.'

A fourth great principle which throws light on the subject of infant-salvation, is the doctrine of the resurrection. That the dead shall be raised as a result of Christ's mediatorial work, needs no proof. As by Adam came death, so by Christ came the resurrection of the dead. The Adamic constitution, when viewing man as a fallen being, brings his body to the dust, and leaves it there. Only as a consequence of the work of the Mediator, can any of the dead be raised again to life. The resurrection, therefore, is, in itself, a blessing, a counterpart of the temporal death included in the original curse, and an immediate fruit of what was in all respects redemptional and restorative. To the wicked, indeed, it will be transmuted into an evil. Their peculiar sin under the moral administration of the economy of mercy, their personal iniquity superinduced on their original sinfulness, their guilt in rejecting the direct or traditional light of revelation, will entail upon them, in the form of suffering in a resuscitated body, a punishment additional to that which flows from the breach of the Adamic constitution. Very different, however, will be the case of all who die in infancy. They have no personal transgression, no guilt against divine revelation, no iniquity superinduced on original sin, which can entail on them a superadded penalty. The resurrection will come to them, not as a boon of mercy which they have perverted by personal guilt into a means of peculiar punishment; but it will come to them in its proper, untransmuted character, as a blessing, a saving good, a direct result of Christ's redemptional work. What follows, then, but that they are interested in Christ as Mediator, that they have a part in the benefits of his atonement, that, being made assured partakers of one of the results of his saving work, they are made partakers of the whole?

A fifth great principle which throws light on the subject of infant-salvation, is the differential character of Jewish and of Gentile children under the Mosaic dispensation. Jewish children were, Gentile children were not, admissible to the ordinances of the covenant. Multitudes of the Jews inferred from this fact that all their own children were saved, and that all those of the Gentiles perished. But Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, shows that the reason of evil as regards any infants of the human family is a reason which applies equally to all,—that without distinction of Jew and Gentile, death reigned from Adam to Moses over all who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,—and that, in consequence, all infants, be they who they may, are alike affected by the results of the breach of the Adamic constitution. The reason, then, of the admissibility of all Jewish children to the ordinances of the typical economy, and of the exclusion from them of all the children of the Gentiles, must be found in the covenant-character of that economy,—in its being an administration, or an exhibition by figurative ordinances, of the covenant of salvation. Abraham himself 'received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.' Before he could be circumcised, he required to be actively a believer. Before, too, any Gentile could be circumcised, he required to be personally or actively a proselyte to the Jewish faith. Before any adult, be he who he might, could be circumcised, he required to assume for himself the responsibility of concurrence in the obligations and doctrines of the Mosaic dispensation. But infants—all infants who were under the economy—infants simply as such, were circumcised. Their eligibility consisted solely in their being born under the covenant of typical ordinances,—that covenant or economy which symbolized and exhibited the covenant of salvation. What, then, was their participation in the symbolical rite, but a pledge or exhibition of the participation of infants as such—or of all who die in infancy, and do not contract personal iniquity,—in 'the righteousness of the faith' of the well-ordered and everlasting covenant?

Another great principle which throws light on the subject of infant-salvation, is the parallelism between the representation of Adam and the representation of Christ, in all particulars except 'the one' and 'the many offences,' and 'the receiving' or 'the rejecting' of 'the abundance of grace.' Paul, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, professedly exhibits this parallelism. He announces that the representations are the same in character, the same in adaptation,—that 'Adam was the figure of him that was to come,'—that 'as sin hath reigned unto death, even so grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.' In all particulars, except two, he describes them in strictly parallel or antithetic phraseology. Adam's representation, he says, is by one offence unto condemnation; but Christ's representation is over many offences—for the removal not only of original sin, but of actual transgressions—unto justification of life. Adam's representation results only in placing man under the divine economy as relative sinners, and leaves them, at their personal responsibility, to work out 'many offences' for themselves; but Christ's representation results in their 'receiving abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness,' or of their 'receiving power to become the sons of God,' and in their being sustained and directed in a course of holiness, till they 'reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' These two points constitute the excelling power, or the abounding of grace by Christ; and they are stated by the apostle as the points of difference between Christ's representation and that of Adam. In all other respects, he treats the two representations as parallel; and does so, with the case of infants, or of 'those who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,' directly in his view. Now, while the two points of difference are exactly such as occasion a separation between the believing and the unbelieving, the subjects of grace and the rejecters of mercy, the saved and the lost, among adults; they are of a character which is in no respect applicable to infants. Neither the many offences, nor the receiving or refusing of the grace of active faith, is affirmable of any one who has not the capacity of active moral agency and active understanding. What follows, then, from the parallelism of the two representations in all other particulars, but that all who die in infancy as surely receive life and salvation in connexion with Christ, as they undergo suffering and temporal death in connexion with Adam?

A chief great principle which throws light on the doctrine of infant-salvation, is the illustrative



harmony of that doctrine with the general scheme of saving truth. 'They brought young children to Jesus,' says the evangelist, 'that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.' Mark x. 13—16; Luke xviii. 15—17; Matt. xix. 13—15. These words might be quoted as a direct assertion of the doctrine of infant-salvation. The gloss which some commentators put upon them—that of such as resemble little children in disposition is the kingdom of heaven—hardly requires refutation. Our Lord is assigning a reason why infants themselves should be brought to him; and he surely cannot be construed to mean that the resemblance of his people to them in disposition is such a reason. Can we really understand him to say, 'Suffer a child to come to me, because a believing adult who resembles a child in temper is an heir of heaven?' If so, the reason would apply also to sheep and lambs; his people being as truly compared to them as to children, and compared to both on the same principle. He speaks, then, of infants in their own persons; he affirms that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,'—intimating, as would appear, that the society of the redeemed is, to a large and even distinguishing amount, composed of them; and he adds, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' Infant-salvation, as to its basis and mode, is the very exemplar of salvation in general. Those dying in infancy are saved by grace, wholly by grace, altogether in virtue of the representative work and substitutionary righteousness of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. They are, in every view, monuments of sovereign mercy; simply as sinners, condemned and void of righteousness, they are objects of redeeming favour; not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to God's mercy, they are saved; and, as ransomed from the power of the grave, as redeemed from every part of the curse, as imbued with a new, a spiritual, an everlasting life, they are altogether to the praise of the glory of God's grace, who accepts them in the Beloved. They are saved from every part of the curse entailed upon them by Adam, except that temporal portion which, with a wise and beneficent design, Christ allows to remain, that he may transmute it into a means of translating them to heaven, and investing them with bodies spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, and fashioned like unto his own glorious body. But as sin reigns to the infliction on them of temporal death, 'even so grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.' Now just as they are saved, so must adults. Our salvation must be wholly of grace, directly from God's mercy, altogether a result of Christ's representative and redemptional work, leaving us to 'groan in this tabernacle, being burdened, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein.'

I might adduce other arguments; but I choose rather to let those which I have stated give an impetus of inquiry to the mind of any doubtful reader, and to leave him to find corroborations of them in texts, such as Matt. xviii. 1—14, which may occur in the ordinary course of his reading or reflection. I have virtually anticipated reply to objections. That the number of the saved is small, is an idea which occurs only in connexion with the administrative character of the gospel-economy, and, in consequence, so far as it is true, applies only to adults. That salvation is sovereign, and is bestowed according to God's eternal purpose, or the good pleasure of his own will, is not contradicted, but exhibited, illustrated, and enforced, in the fact of the salvation of all dying in infancy. They are all, as we have seen, of one class; they all, in the same sense and in the same circumstances, lie under the effects of strictly one act; and they are all saved by sovereign mercy, by free favour, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.—ED.]

## THE PUNISHMENTS OF SIN.

QUESTION XXVIII. *What are the punishments of sin in this world?*

ANSWER. The punishments of sin in this world, are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, together with death itself.

QUESTION XXIX. *What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?*

ANSWER. The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever.

### *The Punishments of Sin in the Present Life.*

In the former of these Answers, we have an account of those punishments to which sin exposes men in this world. These are distinguished as either inward or outward, personal or relative. Those which are styled outward, respect more especially our condition in the world, as we are liable to many adverse dispensations of pro-

vidence ; and are generally reckoned by sinners the greatest, as they are the most sensible, subjecting them to the many evils and miseries which befall them in their bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, and as they end in death, the most formidable of all evils. In reality, however, the punishments of sin which are styled inward, such as blindness of men, hardness of heart, &c., how little soever they are regarded by those who fall under them, by reason of that stupidity which is the natural consequence of them, are by far the greatest, and most dreaded by all who truly fear God, and see things in a just light, being duly affected with that which would render them most miserable in the end.

I. We shall consider, first, the punishments which are called inward. These respect either the understanding, will, conscience, or affections.

1. We are said to be exposed to blindness of mind. This the apostle describes, in a most moving way, when he speaks of the Gentiles, as 'walking in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.'<sup>v</sup> Ignorance and error are defects of the understanding, in consequence of which it is not able to find out, or desirous to inquire after, the way of truth and peace. Accordingly the apostle says, 'The way of peace have they not known.'<sup>z</sup> By reason of this, we are naturally inclined to deny those doctrines which are of the greatest importance, namely, such as more immediately concern the glory of God, and our own salvation. This ignorance is certainly most dangerous, and cannot be exempted from the charge of sin ; much more, when we are judiciously left to it, as a punishment for other sins committed by us.

2. Another punishment of sin, mentioned in this Answer, is, strong delusion. This is the consequence of the former. That it is a punishment of sin, is inferred from the apostle's words, 'For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.'<sup>a</sup> The meaning is, that God suffers those who receive not the love of the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness, to be deluded, by denying them that spiritual and saving illumination, which would effectually prevent their delusion. Now, that we may consider what the apostle means by 'strong delusion,' we may observe, that every error or mistake in lesser matters of religion, is not intended ; for then few or none would be exempted from this judgment. But it includes a person's entertaining the most abominable absurdities in matters of religion, which are contrary to the divine perfections, and the whole tenor of scripture, and subversive of those truths which are of the greatest importance ; or pretension to revelations, or a turning away from the truth, by giving credit to the amusements of signs and lying wonders. Antichrist is said to come with such signs and lying wonders, 'after the working of Satan ;' and the consequence is, that his followers 'believe a lie,' which they suppose to be confirmed by them.

Errors, in matters of religion, are sometimes invincible and unavoidable, for want of objective light or scripture-revelation ; as in heathens, Mahomedans, and others, who, through the disadvantages and prejudices of education, are estranged from the truth. But even the ignorance of these, in some respects, may be said to be judicial ; for though they do not sin against gospel-light, yet they are guilty of other sins, which justly provoke God to leave them in this state of darkness and ignorance. But the punishment of sin, when God gives men up to this judgment, is more visible in those who have had advantages of education above others, and have had early instructions in the doctrines of the gospel, and who by degrees have turned aside from them, and denied them, and so 'forsaken the guide of their youth.'<sup>b</sup> These sometimes call those sentiments about religious matters which once they received, implicit faith, and please themselves with their new schemes of doctrine, looking, as they say, with pity, or, I might rather say, disdain, on others who are not disentangled from their fetters, or have not shaken off the prejudices of education, or arrived at so free and generous a way of thinking as these pretend to have done. But how much soever they may glory in it, it is a sad instance of God's giving them up, in a judicial way, to the vanity and delusion of

<sup>v</sup> Eph. iv. 17, 18.

<sup>z</sup> Rom. iii. 17.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Prov. ii. 17.



their minds. Accordingly they believe that to be a truth which others can prove to be a lie, and which they themselves once thought so. Now, that this is a punishment of sin, appears from the fact that the gospel, which once they professed to believe, had not its due effect or tendency to subdue their lusts and corruptions. They rebelled against the light, and were under the power of presumptuous sins. Their understanding and talents of reasoning have been enlarged; and, at the same time, the pride and vanity of their minds have not been subdued and mortified, by the grace of God. Hence, they have been given up first to question, then to deny, and afterwards to oppose, and, in the most profane and invidious manner, to ridicule those sacred and important truths which they once received. This is a sad instance of the punishment of sin; and I would make some use of it, in a few practical inferences.

We ought not to be content with a mere speculative knowledge of divine truths, but should endeavour to improve them, to promote practical godliness, as they have a tendency to do in all those who, as the apostle says, 'have so learned Christ,' that they have been 'taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.'<sup>c</sup> Nor ought we to content ourselves with an implicit faith, or to believe the doctrines of the gospel, merely because they have been received by wise and good men in former or later ages; but should be able to render a reason of the faith and hope that is in us, as built upon clear scripture-evidence. On the other hand, we must take heed that we do not despise the many testimonies which God's people have given to the truth, or forsake the footsteps of the flock; as though God had left his servants to delusions or groundless doctrines, and as though there were no light in the world or the church, till those who have studiously endeavoured to overthrow the faith delivered to and maintained by the saints, brought in that which they, with vain boasting, call new light. Further, let us strive against the pride of our understanding, which oftentimes tempts us to disbelieve any doctrine which we cannot fully account for by our shallow methods of reasoning; as though we were the only men who knew any thing, and as though, as Job says, 'Wisdom must die with us.'<sup>d</sup> Again, if we are in doubt concerning any important truth, let us apply ourselves, by faith and prayer, to Christ, the great Prophet of his church, who has promised his Spirit 'to lead' his people 'into all' necessary 'truth,' to establish them in it, and to keep them from being turned aside from it 'by every wind of doctrine,' through the management and sophistry of those who 'lie in wait to deceive.' We ought also to bless God for, and to make a right use of, the labours of others, who have not only been led into the knowledge of the gospel themselves, but have taken much pains, and that with good success, to establish the faith of others therein. Finally, if we have attained to a settled knowledge of the truth, more especially if we have been blessed with a spiritual and practical discerning of it, let us bless God for it, and endeavour to improve it to the best purposes. Our doing this will be a preservative against the sore judgment of being given up to the blindness of our minds, or strong delusions, and thereby to forsake our first faith.

3. Another punishment of sin is hardness of heart, and a reprobate sense. This more especially respects the will; and is inflicted when men are given up to the perverseness and obstinacy of their natures, so that they are fixedly resolved to continue in sin, whatever be the consequence, and cannot bear reproof for it, and refuse to be reclaimed from it, whatever methods are used for recovering them. Thus, though the prophet describes a people as having had forewarnings by sore judgments, and as being at the time under sad rebukes of providence; yet God says concerning them, 'They will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.'<sup>e</sup> The apostle also speaks of some who 'have their consciences seared with a hot iron';<sup>f</sup> and of others as 'sinning wilfully,'<sup>g</sup> that is, resolutely, being headstrong, and determined to persist in their iniquity, like the man described in Job, 'who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers.'<sup>h</sup> In this manner, corrupt nature

<sup>c</sup> Eph. iv. 21.  
<sup>g</sup> Heb. x. 26.

<sup>d</sup> Job xii. 2.  
<sup>h</sup> Job xv. 25.

<sup>e</sup> Ezek. iii. 7.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 2.

expresses its enmity and opposition to God; and when sinners are suffered to go on in this way, it may well be reckoned a punishment of sin, or an instance of God's judicial hand against them for it. This hardness of heart is sometimes compared to 'a stone,'<sup>i</sup> or 'a rock,'<sup>k</sup> or 'an adamant,' which is hardly broken with an hammer,<sup>l</sup> or 'an iron sinew.' Sometimes, also, their 'brow' is said to be 'as brass';<sup>m</sup> and at other times they are compared to 'a swift dromedary, traversing her ways;' to 'the wild ass, used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure';<sup>n</sup> to 'the bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke';<sup>o</sup> or to 'the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears, that will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely.'<sup>p</sup> This stupidity of the heart of man is so great, that it inclines him to go on in a course of rebellion against God, and at the same time to conclude all things to be well. This is the most dangerous symptom, and a visible instance of God's judicial hand, as a punishment of sin in this life.

There are several instances, in which this hardness of heart discovers itself. One instance is when men are not afraid of God's judgments threatened, and do not regard the warnings given of them beforehand; or when they refuse to humble themselves under them, as God says to Pharaoh, 'How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?'<sup>q</sup> Another instance is, when they stifle and do not regard those convictions of conscience which they sometimes have; or when, though they know that what they do is sinful and displeasing to God, they break through all the restraints which should have prevented their committing it. 'Who knowing the judgment of God,' says the apostle, 'that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.'<sup>r</sup> Again, men may be said to be hardened in sin, when they do not mourn for it or repent of it, after they have committed it; but, on the other hand, endeavour to conceal, extenuate, and plead for it, rather than forsake it.

Here we may inquire what those sins are which more especially lead to this judgment of hardness of heart. One is a neglect of ordinances, such as the word preached, as though we counted it an indifferent matter whether we wait at wisdom's gate or not, or whether we make a visible profession of subjection to Christ, and desire of communion with him; and particularly when we live in the constant neglect of secret prayer. Accordingly the hardened sinner is thus described, 'Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.'<sup>s</sup>—Another sin leading to it, is a person's delighting in or associating himself with such companions as are empty and vain, express an enmity to the power of godliness, and frequently make things sacred the subject of their wit and ridicule; choosing such for his bosom-friends, who cannot bear to converse about divine things, but rather depreciate or cast contempt on them. Such an one is called, 'a companion of fools,' and is contrasted to those that 'walk with wise men, who shall be wise.'<sup>t</sup> There is no method which will have a more direct tendency to harden the heart, or root out any of the remains of serious religion, than this.—A third sin tending to hardness of heart, is a shunning of faithful reproof, or concluding those to be our enemies who, because they administer to us faithful reproof, are our best friends. He who cannot bear to be told of his crimes by others, will in a little while cease to be a reprover to himself, and in consequence will be exposed to the judgment of hardness of heart.—A fourth sin leading to this judgment, is our venturing on occasions of sin, or committing it presumptuously, without considering its heinous aggravations, or the danger which will follow. These things will certainly bring on us a very great degree of hardness of heart.

But as there are some who are afraid of falling under this judgment, and are ready to complain that the hardness which they find in their own hearts is of a judicial nature, we shall inquire what the difference is between that hardness of heart which believers often complain of, and the judicial hardness which is considered in this Answer as a punishment of sin. There is nothing that a believer more complains of, than the hardness and impenitency of his heart, its lukewarmness and stupidity under the ordinances; and there is nothing that he more de-

i Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

n Jer. ii. 23, 24.

r Rom. i. 32.

k Jer. xxiii. 29.

o Jer. xxxi. 18.

s Job xv. 4.

l Zech. vii. 12.

p Psal. lviii. 4, 5.

t Prov. xiii. 20.

m Isa. xlvi. 4.

q Exod. x. 3.



sires, than to have this redressed. He is sometimes, also, not without a degree of fear, lest he should be given up to judicial hardness. Now, to prevent discouragements of this nature, let it be considered, that judicial hardness is very seldom perceived, and never lamented. A broken and a contrite heart is the thing which the judicially hardened least desire. But it is otherwise with believers. As it is said of Hezekiah, that 'he was humbled for the pride of his heart;' <sup>u</sup> so all they who have the truth of grace, and none but such, are exceedingly grieved for the hardness of their heart. This is an evidence that it is not judicial, how much soever it be, in common with every sin, the result of the corruption of nature, and the imperfection of the present state.—Again, judicial hardness is perpetual. Or, if ever there be any remorse or relenting, or the soul is distressed by reason of its guilt or the prevalency of sin, it is only at such times when he is under some outward afflictions, or filled with a dread of the wrath of God; and, as this wears off, or abates, his stupidity returns as much, or more, than ever. Thus it was with Pharaoh. When he was affrighted with the mighty thundering and hail with which he was plagued, 'He sent for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.'<sup>x</sup> But, when the plague was removed, it is said, that 'he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart.' It is otherwise, however, with a believer. Sometimes, when no adverse dispensations, with respect to his outward circumstances in the world, trouble him, he is full of complaints, and greatly afflicted, that his heart is no more affected in holy duties, or inflamed with love to God, or zeal for his glory, or that he cannot delight in him as he would, or obtain a complete victory over indwelling sin, which is his constant burthen. And whenever he has a degree of tenderness or brokenness of heart, under a sense of sin, it is not merely fear of the wrath of God as a sin-revenging Judge, or of the dreadful consequences of sin committed, which occasions it, but a due sense of that ingratitude and disingenuity, which there is in every act of rebellion against him who has laid him under such inexpressible obligations to obedience.—Further, judicial hardness is attended with a total neglect of all holy duties, more especially those which are secret. But that hardness of heart which a believer complains of, though it occasion his going on very uncomfortably in duty, yet rather incites him to it, than drives him from it.—Moreover, when a person is judicially hardened, he makes use of indirect and unwarrantable methods to maintain that false peace which he thinks himself happy in the enjoyment of. That which he betakes himself to, deserves no better a character than a refuge of lies; and the peace he rejoices in, deserves no better a name than stupidity. But a believer, when complaining of the hardness of his heart, cannot take up with any thing short of Christ and his righteousness. It is his presence which gives him peace; and he always desires that faith may accompany his repentance, that so, whenever he mourns for sin, the comfortable sense of his interest in him may afford him a solid and lasting peace. This is vastly different from that stupidity and hardness of heart which is a punishment of sin.

There is another expression in this Answer, 'a reprobate sense,' or, as the apostle calls it, 'a reprobate mind,'<sup>y</sup> which denotes little more than a greater degree of judicial hardness. This God is said to have given those up to, 'who did not like to retain him in their knowledge.' The meaning is, that persons, by a course of sin, render their hearts so hard, their wills so obstinate and depraved, as well as their understandings so dark and defiled, that they hardly retain those notices of good and evil which are enstamped on the nature of man, and which, at times, have a tendency to check and restrain from sin. These become entirely lost, and are extinguished by the prevalency of corrupt nature, and a continued course of presumptuous sins; and, as the result of this, they extenuate and excuse the greatest abominations. Thus Ephraim is represented as saying, 'In all my labours, they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin;' <sup>z</sup> whereas God says, in a following verse, that 'they provoked him to anger most bitterly.'<sup>a</sup> Persons who are given up to a reprobate mind eventually entertain favourable thoughts of the vilest ac-

<sup>u</sup> 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.<sup>x</sup> Exod. ix. 27.<sup>y</sup> Rom. i. 28.<sup>z</sup> Hos. xii. 8.<sup>a</sup> Ver. 14.

tions. 'They call evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, and light for darkness; they put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.'<sup>b</sup>

4. The next spiritual judgment, mentioned in this Answer, as a punishment of sin, is a person's being given up to 'vile affections.' This God is said to have done to those whom the apostle describes, as 'giving themselves over to the committing of those sins' which are contrary to nature,<sup>c</sup> such as all men abhor who do not abandon themselves to the most notorious crimes. This is a contracting of that guilt which is repugnant to those natural ideas of virtue and vice which even an unregenerated man, who has not arrived to this degree of impiety, cannot but abhor. These are such as are not to be named among Christians, or thought of without the utmost regret, and an afflictive sense of the degeneracy of human nature.

5. The last thing mentioned in this Answer, in which the inward punishment of sin, in this life, consists, is, 'horror of conscience.' Under the foregoing instances of spiritual judgments, conscience seemed to be asleep; but now it is awakened, and that by the immediate hand of God; and this is attended with a dread of his wrath. Horror and despair are the result. 'The arrows of the Almighty are with in him, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against him.'<sup>d</sup> 'Terrors take hold on him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand.'<sup>e</sup>

This differs from those doubts and fears which are common to believers; inasmuch as it is attended with despair, and a dreadful view of God, as a God 'to whom vengeance belongeth,' and is attended, as the apostle says, 'with a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.'<sup>f</sup> Before experiencing it, the sinner took a great deal of pains to stifle convictions of conscience; and now he would fain do it, but cannot. This is a sad instance of the wrath of God pouring forth gall and wormwood, according to the prophet's words, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee.'<sup>g</sup>

But, now that we are speaking concerning horror of conscience, we must take heed lest we give occasion to doubting believers, who are under great distress of soul, through a sense of sin, to apply what has been said, to themselves, for their farther discouragement, and to conclude that this is a judicial act of God, and a certain evidence that they have not the truth of grace. There is a difference in three respects, between that horror of conscience which we have been describing, and that distress of soul to which believers are often liable. The unregenerated, under horror of conscience, flee from God as from an enemy, and desire only to be delivered from his wrath, and not from sin, the occasion of it. The believer, on the contrary, desires nothing so much as that his iniquity, which is the occasion of it, may be subdued and forgiven, and that he may have that communion with God, which he is destitute of. In order to this he constantly desires to draw nigh to him in ordinances, and, if he cannot enjoy him, he mourns after him. Thus the psalmist complaineth, as one in the utmost degree of distress, 'Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.'<sup>h</sup> Yet he says, 'Unto thee have I cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.'<sup>i</sup> Again, the one reproaches God, and entertains unworthy thoughts of him, as though he were severe, cruel, and unjust to him; while the other, with an humble and penitent frame of spirit, complains only of himself, acknowledges that there is no unrighteousness with God, and lays all the blame on his own iniquity. Further, horror of conscience, when it is judicial, seldom continues any longer than while a person is under some outward afflictive dispensation of providence. Under this his sin is increased; and the removal of it leaves him as stupid as he was before. But it is otherwise with a believer. The removal of God's afflicting hand, as to outward troubles, will not afford him any remedy against his fears, unless sin be mortified, and God is pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon him, and give him joy and peace in believing.

b Isa. v. 20.  
f Heb. x. 27.

c Rom. i. 26.  
g Jer. ii. 19.

d Job vi. 4.  
h Psal. lxxxviii. 7.

e Chap. xxvii. 20—22.  
i Ver. 13.



II. Having considered the inward punishments of sin, in this life, we are now to say something concerning those which, in this Answer, are styled outward. Of these, some are the immediate consequence of the first entrance of sin into the world, and others are increased by the frequent commission of sin. The former include the curse of God upon the creature for our sakes, and our liability to death; the latter respect the various other evils that befall us, of which some are personal, and others relative. Many evils are said to befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments.

1. The curse of God was denounced against the creatures, immediately after man's apostacy from him. This is, in part, contained in the threatening, 'Cursed be the ground for thy sake; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground.'<sup>k</sup> It is very elegantly described by the apostle, who speaks of 'the creature' as 'subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope;' and of 'the whole creation groaning and travailling in pain together until now.'<sup>l</sup> The general scope and design of this passage seems to be, that the creature retains the visible marks of the curse of God, which followed upon man's sin. I rather think this to be the sense of it, than to suppose, as some do, that 'the creature' spoken of is the Gentile world, and 'the vanity' which it was subject to, that idolatry to which they were universally addicted. That interpretation does not seem to agree with what the apostle says, when he supposes that their subjection to this vanity was 'not willingly;' nor can it well be called 'the bondage of corruption.' If, on the other hand, we understand it to mean that the part of the creation which was more immediately designed for the use of man, was abused, and so made subject to that vanity which is the consequence of his fall, this agrees very well with its being 'not willingly.' For the apostle is speaking here of creatures not endowed with understanding and will, yet abused by those that are; and therefore their subjection to men's vanity is not so much from themselves, as from man's sin. He then speaks of the liability of all these things to corruption, as the world is decaying, and growing towards a dissolution. [See Note 3 G, page 434.] How far this curse of God on the creature extended itself, whether only to this lower world, or to the heavenly bodies themselves, such as the sun, moon, and stars, I pretend not to determine. I desire not to extend my conjectures beyond the line of scripture, which speaks of 'the earth,' as 'cursed for man's sake;' and how far the other parts of nature are liable to corruption, or inclined towards a dissolution, it is hard to say. All that I shall add on this subject, is, that when the curse on the creature is called a punishment consequent on man's sin, it more especially respects man, who is the only subject of punishment in this world. Inanimate creatures are the matter in which he is punished; but he alone is the subject of punishment. But there are evils which befall us, in which we are more immediately concerned; and these are either personal or relative. Accordingly,

2. We are liable to bodily diseases, which are a continual weakness, or a decay of nature; and afterwards to death, which is the dissolution of the bodily frame. All the pains and disorders of nature whereby our health is impaired, and our passage through this world rendered uneasy, are the consequence of our sinful and fallen state, and, in that respect, are sometimes styled a punishment of sin. Thus, when our Saviour healed the man who was sick of the palsy, he intimates by the mode of expression used that his sickness was the consequence of sin: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'<sup>m</sup> The psalmist also speaks of God's 'pardoning the iniquities of his people, and healing all their diseases,'<sup>n</sup> at the same time. In this respect, diseases are styled, in a more large sense, a punishment of sin. But, when they have a mixture of the wrath of God in them, and are not rendered subservient to our good, or included among those dispensations which are called fatherly chastisements, as is the case in those who are in an unjustified state, they are, in a more proper sense, punishments of sin. Thus the diseases which God brought on the Egyptians are reckoned among the plagues of Egypt, and so were a visible instance of the vindictive justice of God. The same thing may be said of death, which is

<sup>k</sup> Gen. iii. 17-19.<sup>l</sup> Rom. viii. 20-22.<sup>m</sup> Matt. ix. 2.<sup>n</sup> Psal. ciii. 3.

the dissolution of the frame of nature. It is a consequence of sin, in all; and, in the most proper sense, it is a punishment of sin in those who are liable, not only to the stroke, but to the sting of death, and thereby are brought under the power of the second death.

3. There are many evils which befall us in our names, when we meet with reproaches and injurious treatment, as to what concerns our character in the world, from those who act as though their tongues were their own, and they were not accountable to God for those slanders and revilings which they load us with. We are in this case very ready to complain of the injustice done us, by their endeavouring to deprive us of that which is equally valuable with our lives. But we ought to consider that sin is the cause of all this; and God's suffering them thus to treat us, and thereby to hinder our usefulness in the world, must be reckoned a punishment of sin.

4. There are other evils which befall us in our secular concerns, that is, in our estates and employments in the world, which are entirely at the disposal of providence. These evils render us rich or poor, or they succeed or blast our lawful undertakings. God may send them to us out of his mere sovereignty, without giving an account of his matters to any one. Yet, when we meet with nothing but disappointments or want of success in business; when whatever diligence or industry we use, appears to be to no purpose; when adverse providences, like a torrent, sweep away all that we have in the world; and when poverty comes upon us like an armed man, our condition is to be reckoned no other than a punishment of sin.

5. There are other evils to which we are exposed in our relations. By these we understand the wickedness of those who are nearly related to us, or the steps they take to ruin themselves, and cast a blemish on the whole family to which they belong. The bonds of nature and of natural affection render these very afflictive. When, in particular, they who are related to us attempt anything against us to our prejudice, their doing so is a circumstance which sharpens the edge of the affliction. And, as it is a sin in them contrary to the dictates of nature; so sometimes we may reckon it a punishment to which we are liable, as the consequence of our sin in general. But, if we have occasion to reflect on our former conversation, as not having filled up every relation with those respective duties to which it engages us; if we have been undutiful to our parents, or unfaithful servants to our masters, or broken the bonds of civil society, by betraying or deserting our friends, and setting aside all those obligations which they have laid us under; our conduct often exposes us to afflictive evils of a similar nature, whereby the affliction we meet with in others appears to be a punishment of our own sin.

Having thus considered the punishment of sin in this life, we may make a few remarks for practical improvement. Whatever evils we are exposed to in this world, we ought to be very earnest with God that he would not give us up to spiritual judgments. The punishments of sin which are outward may be alleviated and sweetened with a sense of God's love, and made subservient to our spiritual and eternal advantage. But blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and those other evils which tend to vitiate and defile the soul, which have in them the formal nature of punishment, are to be dreaded like hell. And, as we are to be importunate with God to prevent them, so we ought to watch against those sins that lead to them. Let us, therefore, take heed of being insensible or stupid under any afflictive evils, as neglecting to hear the voice of God who speaks by them, or refusing to receive instruction by correction.—Again, let us not be too much dejected or sink under those outward afflictive providences to which we are liable. For though they are the consequence of sin, yet, if we have ground to conclude by faith that our sins are forgiven, they are not to be reckoned the stroke of justice, demanding satisfaction, and resolving never to remove its hand from us till we are consumed by it. Believers often experience what the prophet prays for, that God 'in wrath remembers mercy.'—Further, let us take heed that we do not ascribe afflictive providences to chance, or content ourselves with a mere reflection on them as the common lot of man in this world, who is 'born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards;' for this we may do, and not be humbled for that sin which, as they are to be reckoned a



punishment for it, they are designed to bring to remembrance. Finally, let us not murmur or quarrel with God, as though he dealt hardly with us in sending afflictive evils; but rather let us bless him, how heavy soever they appear to be, that they are not extreme, but mitigated, and have in them a great mixture of mercy. Thus God says, concerning the evils which he had brought upon Israel, that 'in measure he would debate with them, who stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind; and by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.'<sup>p</sup> By this means, God not only afflicts us less than our iniquities deserve, but brings good to us in the end. If the guilt of sin is taken away, we have ground to conclude that all these things 'shall work together for good,' as he has promised they shall to 'those that love him.'

*The Punishment of Sin in the Future State.*

We are now to consider the punishment of sin in the world to come. Though the wrath of God be revealed, in many instances, in a very terrible manner, as a punishment of sin in this life, yet there is a punishment unspeakably greater which sinners are liable to in the world to come. That this may appear, let us consider the following propositions.

1. That the soul exists after its separation from the body by death, which is evident, from the immateriality thereof, and its being of a different nature from the body. This was known and proved by the light of nature; so that the very heathen, who had no other light than that to guide them, discover some knowledge of it. But this is more plain from scripture; as when it is said, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'<sup>q</sup>

2. The soul thus existing, though separate from its body, must be supposed to retain those powers and capacities it had, while united to it, which are proper to it as a spirit, and particularly as the subject of moral government; and those powers and capacities may also be supposed to be in it in a greater degree, when dislodged from the body, which is a great hinderance to it in its actings, as every one sensibly experiences.

3. It follows, that the soul cannot but be happy, or miserable, in another world; for there is no middle state between these two. This is farther evident from what was observed in the last proposition, concerning the continuance and increase of its powers and faculties, whereby it is rendered more capable of happiness or of misery than it is now.

4. If it goes out of this world under the weight and guilt of sin upon it, it must retain that guilt, because there is no sacrifice for sin, extending itself to that world; no mediator, no gospel, or means of grace; no promises of, or way to obtain, forgiveness.

5. Hence, wicked men, whose sins are not forgiven in this world, are the subjects of punishment in the other.

6. This punishment cannot be castigatory, or paternal, or consistent with the special love of God, or for their advantage, as the punishments of the sins of believers are in this world, since it is always expressed as the stroke of vindictive justice, demanding satisfaction for sins committed.

7. Some are happy in a future state, namely, those who are justified; for 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'<sup>r</sup> But this is not the privilege of all. They who are not justified, or whose sins are not pardoned, are the subjects of the punishment of sin in the world to come. This is a very awful subject, and should be duly improved, to awaken our fears, and put us upon using those means which God has ordained to escape it. But I shall not, in this place, enlarge upon it, since it is particularly insisted on under another Answer.<sup>s</sup> I shall at present observe only, that, as sin is objectively infinite, as being against an infinite God, it deserves eternal punishment. All the punishments inflicted on sinners, in this world, are not proportioned to it; and, consequently, there are vials of wrath, re-

p Isa. xxvii. 8, 9.

q Matt. x. 28.

r Rom. viii. 30.

s See Quest. lxxxix.

served in store, to be poured on those who wilfully and obstinately persist in their rebellion against God, and the punishment will be agreeable to the nature of the crime. Hence, as sin is a separation of the heart and affections from God, and includes a disinclination to converse with him, as well as unmeetness for it, the punishment thereof will consist in a separation from his comfortable presence; and that is to be separated from the fountain of blessedness, which must render the soul beyond expression miserable. This is generally called a punishment of loss. But there is, besides, a punishment of sense, expressed by those grievous torments which are to be endured in soul and body. The soul, in a moral sense, may be said to be capable of pain, as it has an afflictive sensation of those miseries which it endures; and the body is so in a natural sense, which, as it has been a partner with the soul in sinning, must likewise be so in suffering. This farther appears, from the fact that the body endures several pains and evils, as punishments of sin in this life, which shall be continued and increased in another. This is usually expressed by that punishment which is most terrible, namely, of fire; and the place in which it is inflicted, is hell, and the duration of it is to eternity. But of these things more shall be said elsewhere.<sup>s</sup>

s See Quest. lxxxix.

[NOTE 3 G. *The Creation Subject to Vanity.*—Numerous conflicting opinions are entertained as to the meaning of Rom. viii. 19—23. In only one thing do they seem agreed,—that the word *κτίσις*, which is rendered ‘creature’ and ‘creation,’ being uniform in the original, ought to have been uniformly translated. This ‘creature’ or ‘creation’ is contended to be the inanimate mass of our world,—the lower animals,—the whole frame of nature,—the Gentile world,—the Jewish race,—the good angels,—the spirits of fallen angels and men. Against all these opinions, there is an objection which appears to me insuperable: they are utterly inconsistent with both the preceding and the subsequent context. Except by an effort of fancy, or a flourish of rhetoric, they admit the view of no consecutive or intelligible point of transition, either to the passage from what goes before, or from it to what follows. Interpret them as we may, they reduce the entire statement respecting ‘the creature’ or ‘creation,’ not simply to a remarkable digression, but apparently to an aimless and unaccountable episode. Other objections occur against the opinions in detail, and particularly against that which is adopted by Dr. Ridgely. Instead, however, of stating these, I shall give a brief outline of reasons for understanding the passage to speak of the mortal condition, the longings, the hopes, and the eventual glorification of the people of God.

A preliminary remark of some importance is, that the words ‘create’ and ‘creation’ are used, in the New Testament, quite as freely in the moral as in the physical sense. They occur five times in reference to physical creation in the abstract, six times in reference to the inanimate creation, six times in reference to intelligent creatures, and five times in reference to redeemed and regenerated men. Thus, as far as regards New Testament usage, the authority for interpreting the terms in these several applications is very nearly equal. Internal evidence and the scope of a context must alone, in any instance, determine in which of the senses they are to be understood. The passages in which they are applied to regenerated men are as unequivocal, as characteristic, as fully in the current style of inspired writing, as those in which they are applied either to all rational creatures or to the physical world. ‘We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.’ ‘Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.’ ‘Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.’ ‘In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,’ *καὶνὴ κτίσις*. ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,’ *καὶνὴ κτίσις*, Eph. ii. 10. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10; Gal. vi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 17. These texts apply the name *κτίσις* just as directly and distinctively to a regenerated believer on earth, as other texts apply it to any intelligent creature or to any human being. Hence, if the collective appellation *παῖς ἡ κτίσις* is, as two passages in the New Testament (Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 23.) show it to be, properly expressive of the aggregate body of human beings, it must also be properly expressive of the aggregate body of regenerated men on earth. Now, in which of these senses, or in which of any others, must it be understood in Rom. viii. 22? Internal evidence, it would seem, is not sufficiently strong, or at least is not sufficiently discerned, to lead almost any two commentators to the same determination. What remains, then, but that the sense must be decided wholly by the context? Even apart from the various and the equally authenticated senses of the word *κτίσις*, and apart also from the absence, real or supposed, of a decisive internal guide in the passage in question, the rule of exposition is, on all hands, admitted to be of paramount and conclusive authority, that whichever of two or more senses of a scripture accords best with its context is the most sound. To ascertain, therefore, what ‘the creation’ is which is ‘subject to vanity,’ and which ‘waits for the adoption, the redemption of the body,’ we need only to notice the connexion in which the statements respecting it are introduced.

From the commencement of the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, on to what immediately precedes the passage in question, the apostle discusses the results of justification. He speaks, without even one slight digression, solely of the condition and character of regenerated men on earth. He shows what blessings they enjoy, what moral evils they conflict with, what principles actuate them, what hopes they possess; and he finishes his extended view of the moral



results of their justification, by saying, 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together,' Rom. viii. 12—17. He here, in the conclusion of his summary view, glances at the fact of God's justified people being subject, while on earth, to physical suffering. Though, as justified persons, they are fully delivered from the condemning power of sin, and are 'heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ;' yet they are not, in the present life, freed in any degree from the evils of mortality and physical affliction. Now how comes it, some might ask, that the penalty of sin being removed, and the sinner himself accepted as righteous in the sight of God, he should still remain subject to the exterior or physical part of the original curse? The apostle proceeds as if some such question as this had been proposed; he, at all events, glances at the fact that God's justified people continue subject to physical suffering, and goes on to explain how it comports with their justified condition, with the great principles of their redemption from all evil, with, on the one hand, their deliverance from condemnation, and, on the other, their hopes and safety as the appointed and purchased subjects of assured, complete, and everlasting well-being. 'For,' says he, 'I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,' chap. viii. 18. He thus intimates that, as the sufferings of believers are a 'suffering with Christ,'—a suffering in a state of union with him, and under the administration of his mediatorial government over the redeemed; so they have connexion with 'a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory' in another world,—a connexion with it so intimate, so preparative, so morally instrumental, that, being assurdly sufferers with Christ, they shall also be assuredly 'glorified together' with him. Then, to explain what this connexion is between present physical suffering and future glory, he proceeds to say: 'For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; for the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected it, in hope that this very creation shall be freed from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God,'—Τῇ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἡ κτίσις ὑποτάχθη, οὐχ ἰκούσα, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθεροῖσθαι ἀπο τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ Θεοῦ. The phrase 'manifestation of the sons of God,' ἡ ἀποκαλύψις τῶν υἱῶν, as applied to a future event, or an event which shall take place in a future state of things, implies that the present condition of the sons of God is clouded, screened, unveiled, not open to the view. Believers, as subject to the same physical evils which afflict the rest of men, are 'in disguise;' they do not appear to the eye of sense to possess the surpassingly glorious distinctions which really belong to them; and they earnestly expect the manifestation, the revelation, the unveiling, the unclouded display of the dignity and excellence which redeeming mercy and sovereign favour have conferred on them as the sons of God. For, though apparently afflicted with the same evils as the rest of men, they know themselves to be distinguished far above them, and possess a living and rejoicing hope as to the design and results of their very suffering. They are subject to vanity, or to mortality and physical evil, not willingly,—not as a final end, not as a result of their amenability to divine justice, not simply that they may suffer and die; but according to an economy of divine sovereignty, wisdom, and love, 'by reason of him who hath' placed them in the condition which they occupy, 'in hope that they shall all,' the most afflicted and obscure as well as the more prosperous and eminent, 'be freed from the bondage,' the confined and enslaved state of privilege and enjoyment, in which they are held by their mortality, 'into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.' 'For we know,' continues the apostle, 'that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,'—all believers on earth experience the pressure of their mortal state, and feel that, though they have the glory, they have not yet the freedom of the glory of God's children; 'and not only so,' οὐ μόνον δι, 'but even we who have the first fruits of the Spirit,' we apostles and others who enjoy the pentecostal, supernatural, or most excellent gifts of the Spirit, and who of all believers may justly be esteemed the most honoured and happy, 'even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body; for we are saved by hope,'—we are, in the present life, under a dispensation, not of the full bestowal of the blessings of redemption, but of only begun enjoyment of them, and of living and assured hope that they shall all at last be perfectly and for ever realized,—that, while the soul shall be made completely pure and glorious, 'the vile body itself shall be changed and fashioned like unto Christ's own glorious body.'

I might proceed to show how well the brief exposition I have now given accords with all the subsequent context down to the close of the chapter. Any attentive reader, however, will be able to trace the accordance for himself. The passage, as thus understood, seems compactly and consecutively connected with the whole preceding and subsequent scope of the apostle's statements and reasonings; and it abounds in beautiful, exquisite truths, intimately in keeping with the great subject of discussion in the epistle, and altogether requisite to complete the view which is there exhibited of the results of justification and the position of the justified. Nearly a parallel passage to it is 2 Cor. v. 1—9.—ED.]

## GENERAL VIEW OF SALVATION.

QUESTION XXX. *Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?*

ANSWER. God will not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works; but, of his mere love and mercy, delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.

*The Design and Nature of Salvation.*

WE have considered man as made upright, and having many blessings in possession, and more in expectation, according to the tenor of the covenant he was under. We have considered also the first entrance of sin into the world, with all those miseries that attended it. And we are now led to speak of that inestimable display of divine love and grace which appears in our salvation. This is considered in a general way in the present Answer.

Something is supposed, namely, that if God had left man in the state into which he brought himself by sin, he would have perished for ever. He was not only in danger of ruin, but sunk in it. He was like a brand in the fire, that would soon have been consumed, had he not been plucked out. His state was not only miserable, but hopeless; inasmuch as he could not think of any expedient how he might recover himself. He was guilty, and no creature could make atonement for him. He was separated from the comfortable presence of God, whose terrors made him afraid, and whose hand was heavy upon him; and he could not apply himself to any one who would interpose or appear in his behalf, or by whom he might be restored to the enjoyment of those privileges which he had forfeited and lost. What tongue can express, or heart be suitably affected with, the misery of his condition! And this would have been our deplorable case for ever, had we been left by God in our fallen state. But we have, in the gospel, a door of salvation opened; we have there glad tidings proclaimed to those who were sunk as low as hell. This is the only spring of hope and comfort to those who are afflicted with a sense of their sin and misery.

Accordingly, it is farther observed, that God will not leave all mankind to perish in that state, but designed to deliver his elect out of it, and bring them into a state of salvation. That God designed not to leave mankind in this miserable condition, appears from the discovery he made of the way of salvation, in the promise which he gave to our first parents, respecting 'the seed of the woman' who was to 'break the serpent's head;' or the Saviour's being 'manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' All the promises contained in the gospel are, as it were, an improvement on this, or a continued declaration of God's purpose relating to the salvation of his people. The work of redemption, wrought out by Christ as God incarnate, was a wonderful discovery of the great truth, that God had a design to recover and save lost sinners. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, by whom the redemption purchased by Christ is applied, and that joy and peace which they have in believing, which are, as it were, the first-fruits of eternal life, are also a convincing proof that God determined not to leave man to perish in his fallen state. We may add, that even the malice and rage of Satan, and all the endeavours used by him to defeat this design, and the glorious victory which God enables his people to obtain over him, 'who are made more than conquerors through him that loved them,' are so many convincing proofs, that God designed not to leave man in his ruined condition, but to make known to him the way of salvation,—first to make him meet for it, and then to bring him to the possession of it.

Salvation is an inestimable privilege, containing all the ingredients of blessedness, such as are adapted to the condition of miserable sinners. It is a very comprehensive privilege. This will appear, if we consider from what it delivers us, and what it brings us into the possession of. There is a great variety of blessings contained in our deliverance. We are saved from sin, that is, from the guilt of it in justification, and from the dominion of it in sanctification. We are saved also



from that bondage to which we were liable, whereby we were in perpetual dread of the wrath of God, desiring to flee from his presence, and naturally inclined to yield ourselves subjects and slaves to his greatest enemy. All these we are delivered from. And there are many positive blessings and privileges which we are made partakers of; such as, grace and peace begun here, and perfected in glory hereafter. And these are such as not only exceed our highest desert but tend to make us completely and eternally happy.

### *The Subjects of Salvation.*

Salvation is not extended to all miserable creatures. Angels, who were the first that rebelled against God, were left to perish, without hope of salvation, being reserved for ever in chains under darkness. As for fallen man, how extensive soever the proclamation of salvation in the gospel is, as preached to all nations, and though all who sit under the sound of it are commanded and encouraged to press after salvation; yet it is applied only to those who were ordained to eternal life. The purpose of God relating to it, and to the application of it, are joined together in that golden chain, 'Whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.'<sup>t</sup> This, however, has been more particularly considered elsewhere.<sup>u</sup>

### *The Reason of Salvation.*

The only moving cause, or reason, why God bestows this great salvation, or why he has designed to bring any of the sons of men to it, is his mere love and mercy. Salvation, whether considered in its rise in God's eternal purpose, or in the execution of it in the work of conversion and sanctification, as well as in the completing of it in glorification, is ascribed to the sovereign grace and mercy of God. Are we 'chosen in Christ to be holy,' or 'predestinated to the adoption of children by him?' This is said to be 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.'<sup>x</sup> The apostle elsewhere, when resolving this great privilege of salvation, in all the branches of it, namely, regeneration, renovation, and justification, into the same original cause and ground, the kindness, love, and grace of God, excludes all those works of righteousness which we have done, from being the inducement or moving cause leading to it.<sup>y</sup> It was the grace of God which laid the foundation-stone; and it is that which brings the work to perfection.

To make this farther appear, let it be considered that salvation must either be of grace or of debt; that either it must be the result of God's free favour to us, or it must proceed from some obligation which he is laid under by us to confer this privilege. Now it is certain, that it cannot take its rise from any obligation which we can lay on him; for whatever superiority the best of saints has over the worst of sinners, it is from God, and not from the sinner himself. We have nothing but what 'we received' from him, 'of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things.'<sup>z</sup>—Moreover, this salvation must be conferred in such a way as redounds to the glory of him who is the Author of it, whereby all boasting in the creature is excluded; and therefore it cannot take its rise from any thing done by us. It is 'not of works lest any man should boast.'<sup>a</sup> Indeed, that it should be so, is contrary to the main design of the gospel, which is, that no flesh should glory in his presence.—The circumstances, also, in which those are who are said to be the objects of salvation, are such as argue it to be altogether of grace. Whom did the Son of man come to seek and to save, but 'them that were lost?' or to whom was the way of salvation discovered, but those who were going astray from God, and were inclined neither to return to him, nor to apply themselves to any one who might direct them how to regain his lost favour. Even, indeed, if they had been inclined to do the latter, it would have been to no purpose;

<sup>t</sup> Rom. viii. 30.    <sup>u</sup> See Sect. 'Proofs that Election has reference to Sanctification,' under the Head, 'THE DECREES OF GOD.'    <sup>x</sup> Eph. i. 4—6.    <sup>y</sup> Tit. iii. 4—7.    <sup>z</sup> Rom. xi. 35, 36.  
<sup>a</sup> Eph. ii. 9.

since no creature could make known the way of salvation, any more than apply its blessings.

Were man to be considered only as a creature, and so not properly the object of salvation, which is no other than a lost sinner, or did he expect nothing else but some effects of common goodness or the blessings of nature, he could not expect them in a way of merit. To suppose it otherwise, is contrary to the dependence of the creature on God; and hence the blessings of providence must be considered as the result of his free favour. And were man in a sinless state, and able to perform perfect obedience as he was at first, his ability must be supposed to be an unmerited favour. Accordingly, the obedience performed would be no other than a just debt due to God, and it would afford him no plea, from any merit of condignity, for the conferring of any privilege as a reward of it; so that the conferring of the privilege must be the result of the divine favour. But, when we consider him as a sinner, he is altogether unable to do what is good. Hence, if salvation were entirely to depend on our performing obedience, so that any failure in this would deprive us of it, we should never attain it; for the 'obedience would be so imperfect, that God could not, in honour, accept of it. But, alas! fallen man is so far from any disposition or inclination to perform obedience, that his heart is naturally averse to it: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'<sup>b</sup> If therefore such an one is saved, and that in such a way that God is pleased to love him and manifest himself to him, his salvation must be a wonderful instance of divine grace, which no one who has experienced it can think on but with admiration, especially when considering how discriminating it is. 'How is it,' said one of Christ's disciples to him, 'that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'<sup>c</sup>

#### *General View of the Divine Covenants.*

Having considered salvation as designed for all the elect, we proceed to consider the means of their attaining it; or their being brought into a state of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace. As salvation is ascribed to the grace of God; so it is an instance of condescending goodness, that our faith relating to it should be confirmed by such a dispensation as is generally styled a covenant. Thus David, speaking concerning it, says, 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.'<sup>d</sup> This covenant, as respects the parties concerned in it, and the manner in which the grace of God is displayed in it, together with its various dispensations or administrations, is particularly considered under the five following answers. The only thing which remains to be insisted on here, is its being called 'the Second Covenant,' as opposed to the covenant of works, which is styled the First. The covenant of works has been considered under a former answer.<sup>e</sup> All that I shall observe concerning it, at present, is, that though life was promised in it, as including all those blessings which were suited to the state of man in innocency, there was no promise of salvation in it, which is the restoring of forfeited blessings, or a recovery from a state of death and ruin. In this respect, the covenant of grace is opposed to it. Again, though Adam was the head of that covenant, whose obedience or apostacy would convey life or death to all his posterity whom he represented, yet he stood not in the relation of a mediator or surety to them; for that was inconsistent with the dispensation he was under, and is applicable to no other covenant than that which we are considering as opposed to it. Moreover, perfect obedience was demanded as a condition of man's attaining life, and this he was thoroughly furnished to perform; while, in the covenant of grace, if God should insist on our performing perfect obedience, the condition would be, in its own nature, impossible, and we should in consequence, rather be excluded from, than brought into, a state of salvation. Whatever obedience we are engaged to perform as expectants of salvation, is entirely owing to the grace of God, by which 'we are what we are,' as well as attain to the blessings we hope for. Herein the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace differ.

b Rom. viii. 7.

c John xiv. 22.

d 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

e See Quest. xx.



The next thing which we have to observe is, that the covenant of grace is called the Second Covenant. This leads us to inquire whether we have any ground from scripture to conclude that there are more covenants than these two; or at least, whether what we call the second covenant, or the covenant of grace, may not be subdivided into two covenants. The apostle seems to speak of two covenants made with fallen man,—one made with the Israelites, given from mount Sinai, which was designed to continue no longer than during the dispensation they were under; and the other, that which the church has been under ever since the gospel-dispensation was erected, which is to continue to the end of the world. These are described by their respective properties in an allegorical way, and illustrated by a similitude taken from two mountains, Sinai and Sion, and two persons, Agar and Sarah. The former is said 'to gender unto bondage;' the latter brings those who are under it into a state of liberty.<sup>f</sup> The one is said to be 'better' than the other, and is particularly called 'a new covenant;' while the other is represented as 'decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away.'<sup>g</sup> Moreover, the apostle seems to speak of more covenants than one made with the Jewish church; for he says, that 'to them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants,'<sup>h</sup> &c. Speaking elsewhere concerning the Gentiles, as 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' he adds, that 'they were strangers from the covenants of promise.'<sup>i</sup> In both these places, his language seems to argue, that there were more than three covenants made with man. One is the covenant which was made with innocent man; another, the gospel-covenant which we are under; but, besides these, there were other covenants made with Israel. This seems to assume the appearance of an objection to what was formerly observed, that there were in reality but two covenants, and that, whenever we read of any covenant in scripture, it is reducible to one of them. The seeming objection, however, will disappear, if we consider the sense of the scriptures just mentioned.

As to the passages which seem to speak of two distinct covenants made with fallen man, namely, one with the Israelites, and the other that which we are under, they really intend nothing more than two different dispensations of the covenant of grace. In this sense we are to understand the apostle, when he speaks of the two covenants, the old and the new, the first and the second. The covenant is the same, though the dispensation of the grace of God in it, or the way of revealing it to men, differs. This, however, will be more particularly insisted on in those following Answers which treat of the various administrations of grace under the Old and New Testament. As to the scriptures which seem to speak of more covenants than one which the Jewish nation was under, the apostle, by the covenants, seems to intend some different times or periods of the church before our Saviour's incarnation. Of these some divines take notice of four, in each of which there was something new and distinct from the rest in the dispensation of divine providence towards the church. The first took its rise from the promise which God gave to man as soon as he fell, relating to that salvation which was to be brought about in its proper time by the seed of the woman. The second period of the church began after the flood, when God is said to have revealed his covenant to Noah, which he 'established between him and all flesh upon the earth.'<sup>k</sup> A third remarkable period, or change of affairs in the church, was when God called Abraham out of an idolatrous country to 'sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange country;' at which time he established his covenant with him, promising to be 'a God to him, and his seed,' and instituted circumcision 'as a token of it,'<sup>l</sup> on which account it is called, 'the covenant of circumcision.'<sup>m</sup> The fourth and last dispensation or period, which more especially respected the seed of Abraham as increased to a great nation, is what we read of soon after they were delivered from the Egyptian bondage, when God was pleased to separate that nation as a peculiar people to himself, and sent Moses from mount Sinai, where he appeared to them to demand their explicit consent to be his people. On this occasion, when they had promised that all that 'the Lord had said, they would do, and be obedient,' and when a public and solemn sacrifice was offered, and the people were sprinkled with the blood of it, it is said, 'they

f Gal. iv. 24. et seq.  
k Gen. ix. 17.

g Heb. viii. 6, 8, 13.  
l Gen. xvii. 7—11.

h Rom. ix. 4.  
m Acts vii. 8.

i Eph. ii. 12.

saw God, and did eat and drink,' as a farther sign and ratification of this dispensation of the covenant.<sup>n</sup> Afterwards many statutes and ordinances were given them, containing those laws which God enacted for them as a covenant-people. This state of things continued till the gospel-dispensation, which succeeded it, was erected. When the apostle, then, in the scriptures in question, says that the church of the Jews had 'the covenants,' he seems to intend nothing else but the dispensation of the covenant of grace, as subdivided into several periods during the various ages of the church, from the fall of Adam till our recovery by Christ. Hence, though these dispensations were various, yet whatever God has transacted with man, in a federal way, may be considered under two general Heads,—the first called the covenant of works, the other the covenant of grace. The latter of these is to be farther considered under the following Answers.

## THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

**QUESTION XXXI.** *With whom was the covenant of grace made?*

**ANSWER.** The covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the second Adam, and in him, with all the elect, as his seed.

As the covenant of grace is opposed to that which was made with Adam as the head of mankind, so it is considered, in this Answer, as made with the second Adam, and, in him, with all his elect. These are described, by the psalmist, as 'a seed that should serve him, which should be accounted to the Lord for a generation ;'<sup>o</sup> and the prophet Isaiah, speaking of them, says, 'He shall see his seed.'<sup>p</sup>

### *The meaning of the Word 'Covenant.'*

In explaining this Answer, we shall commence by considering what we are to understand by a covenant in general, and more particularly how the word is to be understood as used in scripture. The word commonly used in the Old Testament to signify a covenant<sup>q</sup> being taken in several senses, may be understood better by observing how it is used in those places where we find it, than by inquiring into the sense of the root whence it is derived.—Sometimes it signifies such a compact between two parties as agrees with our common acceptation of the word, especially when applied to transactions between man and man; as in the case of the covenant between Abraham and those neighbouring princes who were 'confederate with him,'<sup>r</sup> in the covenant between Isaac and Abimelech,<sup>s</sup> and in that between Jonathan and David.<sup>t</sup> In all these instances there was mutual stipulation as there is in human covenants; and, for this reason, some affix that idea to the word when it is used to signify God's entering into covenant with man.—But there is another acceptation of it, when God is represented as making a covenant with man, which is more agreeable to the divine perfections and to that infinite distance which there is between him and us. We find, in several places of scripture, that when God is said to make a covenant, there is an intimation of some blessings which he would bestow upon his people, without any idea of stipulation being annexed. Thus we read of God's 'covenant of the day and night,'<sup>u</sup> or that there should be day and night in their season. We read also of God's establishing 'his covenant with Noah and his seed, and every living creature, that all flesh should not be cut off any more by the waters of a flood.'<sup>x</sup> And in Ezek. xxxiv. 25, when God promises that 'evil beasts should cease out of the land,' that his people should 'dwell safely in the wilderness,' and that he would confer several other blessings upon them mentioned in the following verses, he is said to make with them 'a covenant of peace.'—Again, when he promises spiritual blessings to his people, he says, 'This is my covenant with them; my Spirit that is upon thee, and the words that I have put

<sup>n</sup> Exod. xxiv. 1—11.

<sup>o</sup> Psal. xxii. 30.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. liii. 10.

<sup>q</sup> בְּרִית.

<sup>r</sup> Gen. xiv. 13.

<sup>s</sup> Gen. xxvi. 28, 29.

<sup>t</sup> Sam. xx. 16. 17.

<sup>u</sup> Jer. xxxiii. 20.

<sup>x</sup> Gen. ix. 9, 10, 11.



into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever.<sup>y</sup>—Moreover, sometimes the Hebrew word which we translate 'covenant,' is used to signify a statute or ordinance which God has established or appointed in his church. Thus, when God ordained that Aaron and his sons should have the heave-offerings of the holy things, he says, 'These have I given thee, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, to be a statute for ever ;'<sup>z</sup> and adds, in the words immediately following, 'It is a covenant of salt for ever, before the Lord.'<sup>a</sup>—As for the word used in the New Testament,<sup>a</sup> by which the LXX. generally translate the Hebrew word in the Old Testament, it signifies the same thing ; so that both the words imply little more than a divine establishment, or ordinance, in which God gives his people ground to expect promised blessings, in such a way as redounds most to his own glory. At the same time, they who are expectants of the blessings, are not exempted from an obligation to perform those duties to which his grace obliges them, and which will be an evidence of their right to them.

I cannot but farther observe, that, among other acceptations of the word, especially as used by the apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews,<sup>b</sup> it signifies a testament. This word some who treat on the subject rather choose to make use of than to call it a covenant, being warranted so to do by the sense given of it in the scripture. Their reason is, not only that, as the apostle says, it was 'confirmed by the death of the testator ;' but that to call it so conduces more, as they believe, to the advancing of the grace of God in this dispensation, than to style it a covenant in the sense in which the word is commonly used when applied to other matters. But I would rather acquiesce in the medium which some have adopted, who join the ideas of a covenant and a testament together,<sup>c</sup> and style it, in some respects, a covenant, and in others, a testament. If it be called a covenant, they abstract from their ideas of it some things which are contained in the word as applied to human contracts, and add to it other things contained in a testament,—such as the giving or bequeathing of certain legacies, as an act of favour, to those who are thence denominated legatees, interested in gifts which are disposed of by the will of the testator. If, on the other hand, we call it a testament, it seems very agreeable to this dispensation to join with it the idea of a covenant, more especially as to what respects the concern of Christ in it, as its Head or the Person in whom all the benefits contained in the testament are first reposed, as they are purchased by his blood, and in consequence of this, applied by his Spirit. This view agrees very well with the scope of this Answer, in which the covenant is said to be made with Christ, and with the elect in him ; as well as with what is contained in the Answer immediately following, in which the covenant of grace is described in a way accordant with the ideas of those who say that it was made with believers. What we have stated was necessary to be premised, that we may not, in our explanation of the doctrine, advance any thing which is inconsistent with its being a covenant of grace.

#### *Difference between a Human Covenant and the Covenant of Grace.*

That we may further understand this matter, we shall show what there is in the idea of a covenant, as we generally understand the word, when applied to signify a contract between man and man. In this case there are two parties, one of whom is said to stipulate, or enter into a covenant with the other. He makes a proposal that he will, on certain conditions, confer some favours on him, provided he will oblige himself to fulfil them ; and the other party complies with the proposal made, and, in expectation of those advantages, consents to fulfil the conditions enjoined, and accordingly is said to restipulate. When, for example, a person engages another to be his servant, and to give him a reward for his service, and the other consents to serve him, in expectation of the wages which he engages to give him, each party is supposed to be possessed of something to which the other has no right but by virtue of the contract made between them. The servant has no right to the rewards which

y Isa. lix. 21.

z Num. xviii. 19.

a *διαθήκη*.

b Heb. ix. 15—18.

c These style it, Testamento-Fœdus or Fœdus Testamentarium, or Testamentum Fœderale.

his master promises, nor has the master any right to his service, but by mutual consent. Each party also proposes some advantage to himself; and when they enter into the agreement, they are supposed, in some respects, to stand on a level with each other. No one will enter into a covenant with another for performing that to which he had an antecedent right; nor will any one engage to perform any service, as a condition of his receiving benefits to which he had a right without any such condition. Moreover, when two parties are said to enter into covenant with one another, they are supposed, in some respects, to stand in need of some things to which they had before no right. One party needs the reward proposed; the other, the service which he enjoins, as a condition of his bestowing it. These things are generally supposed, and contained in contracts between man and man.

But when God is said to enter into covenant with man, what method soever we take to explain the federal transaction, we must take heed that we do not include in it any thing which is inconsistent with his infinite sovereignty, or which argues him to be dependent on his creatures, as though he had not an antecedent right to the obedience which he demands in the covenant, or as though it were left to man's arbitrary will whether he would perform it or not. Though men may be said to have some things in their own power, so that one has a right to that which another has no right to but by his own consent, and are entirely left to their liberty, whether they will consign over that right which they had to it to another who could not otherwise lay claim to it; yet this is by no means to be applied to man, when considered as having to do with the great God. The best of creatures have no right to any thing, separate from his arbitrary will; and therefore, though stipulation and restipulation are proper words, when applied to a man's covenant, they ought not to be made use of, when we explain the covenant between God and man.

Though the parties concerned in the covenant, as explained in this Answer, namely, God the Father, and Christ the head of his elect, are both divine Persons, so that one of them is not infinitely below the other, as man is below God; and though it is on that account more properly called a covenant, than that which God is said to enter into with man, so that if the ideas of stipulation and restipulation were, in any respect, applicable to the divine dispensation, they might be applied here; yet there are some things implied in the idea of a covenant between man and man which cannot, consistently with the glory of these divine Persons, be supposed of the federal transaction between them, particularly that he who enters into covenant with another, proposes some advantage to himself. A master, when he stipulates with one to be his servant, is supposed as much to need his service as the servant does the wages which he promises to give. There is thus a kind of mutual advantage arising from their agreement. But in the covenant of grace, whether God be said to make it with man, or with Christ as the head of his elect, the advantage which arises from it is ours, and not God's. In this respect, what was done by Christ, made no addition to the essential glory of God or the divine blessedness, any more than man can be said, in that respect, to be profitable to him. Thus some understand those words of the psalmist as spoken by our Saviour, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints which are in the earth.'<sup>d</sup> And this agrees very well with some other things, contained in the same psalm, which are expressly, in other parts of scripture, applied to Christ. If so, the meaning is, that whatever glory God the Father designed to demonstrate by the federal transaction with his Son, he did not, as men do by entering into covenant with one another, propose to receive any addition of glory from it, as though he were really to be profited by it.—Again, when men enter into covenant with one another, they are supposed to have different wills. They might refuse to enter into those engagements which they bring themselves under, as well as to comply with them. The obligation on both sides, is founded in mutual consent; and that is supposed to be arbitrary. But when we consider the eternal compact between the Father and the Son, we must conclude that though they are distinct as to their personality, yet, having the same essential perfections, the will of the Father and that of the Son cannot but be the same. Many who explain this doctrine,



represent the one as proposing, the other as complying with the proposal, the one as demanding, the other as expecting, and each as depending on mutual promises, made by the one to the other. Now, though such a representation seems to be founded on some scripture-expressions to the same purpose, in which the Holy Ghost is pleased to condescend to make use of modes of speaking which are agreeable to the nature of human covenants, as he does in various other instances; yet we must not so far strain the sense of words, as to infer, hence, any thing which is inconsistent with the divine glory of the Father and the Son. We may add, that no act of obedience can be performed by a divine person in the same nature; as there cannot be an act of subjection in that nature which is properly divine. Hence, when we consider Christ, in this respect, as entering into covenant, and as engaging to perform those conditions which were insisted on in it, these are supposed to be performed by him as Mediator, or God incarnate, in his human nature. In this respect, he is the head of the covenant, which is made with him, and in him with the elect. We may suppose, therefore, when we speak of a covenant between the Father and the Son, that, whatever be the will of the Father, the same is the Son's will; and whatever conditions the Son consented to perform, as stipulated in the covenant, it was in his human nature that the work was to be done. It is, hence, well observed, in some following Answers, that he who is the Head or Mediator of this covenant, is, as it was absolutely necessary for him to be, both God and man, in one Person. But of this more hereafter. [See note 3 H, page 451.]

*Proofs of the Covenant of Grace.*

There are several expressions used in scripture which give us sufficient ground to conclude, that there was an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, relating to the salvation of his elect. This, if explained agreeably to the divine perfections, and consistently with the glory of each of these divine Persons, is not only an undoubted truth, but a very important article of faith; as it is the foundation of all those blessings which are promised and applied to us in the covenant of grace, in which is all our salvation and our hope. Here let it be considered, that, when we speak concerning a covenant as passing between the Father and the Son, we understand thereby, that there was a mutual consent between them, that the work of our redemption should be brought about in the way in which it was by our Saviour, when this eternal agreement had its accomplishment. Accordingly, the Father is said to 'have set him up,' as the Head of his elect, 'from everlasting,'<sup>e</sup> and to have ordained that he should execute those offices which he was to perform as Mediator, and receive that revenue of glory which was the result. The Son, as having the same divine will, could not but consent to do this. His doing so is called his eternal undertaking; and both these together are styled the eternal covenant between the Father and him.

For the proof of this doctrine, we might refer to the various scriptures which speak of our Saviour as 'called,' and 'given for a covenant of the people,'<sup>f</sup> and 'foreordained'<sup>g</sup> to perform the work which he engaged in, in the behalf of his elect. We might refer to those also which consider him as consenting to do every thing for his people which he did in time, and to stand in every relation to them which was subservient to their redemption and salvation; which he could not but do, as having the same divine will with the Father, while, without his consent, it could not properly be said that there was a covenant between them. We might further prove the doctrine from those scriptures which speak of him as 'sanctified, and sent into the world'<sup>h</sup> to act as Mediator, as 'sealed by the Father,'<sup>i</sup> and as receiving a 'power to lay down his life, and take it again,'<sup>k</sup> that so he might thereby answer the great end of our redemption. We might draw proofs also from his being empowered to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; from his being confirmed in his priestly office by the 'oath'<sup>l</sup> of the Father; his being sent

<sup>e</sup> Prov. viii. 23.  
<sup>i</sup> John vi. 27.

<sup>f</sup> Isa. xlii. 6.  
<sup>k</sup> John x. 18.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. i. 20.  
<sup>l</sup> Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 21.

<sup>h</sup> John x. 36.

by him to execute his prophetic office to those whom he was to guide in the way of salvation; and his being 'God's King, set on his holy hill of Zion.'<sup>m</sup> When we consider all these things done, on the Father's part, as antecedent to Christ's acting as Mediator, and, at the same time, compare them with scriptures which speak of the Son as consenting to do the will of God, or complying with his call, willing to be and do whatever was necessary to secure the great ends designed; when we consider him as taking the human nature into union with the divine, not without his own consent to do so, and as bearing the punishment due to our sin, which it would not have been just for God to have inflicted, without his will or consent; we have sufficient foundation for asserting, that there was a covenant between the Father and the Son relating to the redemption and salvation of the elect.

But we shall now inquire more particularly into the sense of those scriptures on which this doctrine is founded. Here we cannot wholly pass over what we read in Psal. cxix. 122, 'Be surety for thy servant for good;' and in Hezekiah's prayer, 'I am oppressed, undertake,' or be surety, 'for me.'<sup>n</sup> The Hebrew word is the same in both places, and signifies, not merely to confer some privileges on persons, but to do this under the character of a surety. Hence, when David and Hezekiah pray that they may be delivered, either from their enemies, or their afflictions, by addressing themselves to their Deliverer under this character, it must be supposed that they understand him as having undertaken to be a Surety for his people, which is a character that belongs only to the Son. And since it is evident, that his mediatorial work and character was well known to the Old Testament church, their salvation being equally concerned in it with ours, and since they are often represented as addressing themselves to him by faith and prayer, it seems more than probable that he is considered in his mediatorial character in those texts in which they desire that he would be 'surety for them;' in other words, they pray that, as he was appointed by the Father, and had undertaken by his own consent to stand in that relation, they might be made partakers of the benefits arising thence.

There is another scripture, in which the same word<sup>o</sup> is used, which also seems to be applied to our Saviour: 'Their nobles,' or, as it ought to be rendered, in the singular number, 'their noble,' or magnificent person, 'shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?'<sup>p</sup> This sense of the text is very agreeable to several other prophecies relating to the Messiah's being of the seed of Israel. And when it is said, 'I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me,' the words imply, that he should sustain the character and perform the work of a surety, in behalf of his people; for that is the proper sense of the word there used. 'For who is this that hath engaged his heart to approach unto me?' that is, 'Who is there, among the sons of men, that dares engage in this work, or is qualified for it?' Or the words may be understood with a note of admiration, as if it had been said, 'How glorious a person is this, who hath engaged his heart, or (as it was determined that he should) has freely consented to approach unto me,' that is, in so doing, 'to act as a surety with me for my people!' That this is a more probable sense of the text, than to suppose that it is meant either of Zerubbabel, or some other governor who should be set over them after the captivity, appears, if we compare it with the ninth verse, in which it is said, 'They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King.' This can be meant of none but Christ; for David was dead; and none that sat on his throne or descended from him can, in this place, be called David. Divine worship is said to be performed to the person here spoken of; and this could not be done to a mere creature without idolatry, to which no true sense of scripture can give countenance. Besides, the name 'David the King,'

<sup>m</sup> Psal. ii. 6.

<sup>n</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 14.

<sup>o</sup> The Hebrew word in this, and the two other scriptures above-mentioned, is עָרַב, which signifies, 'In fidem suam recipere;' 'spondere pro aliquo.' It is used in several other scriptures, in the same sense, for a person's undertaking to be a surety for another. See Gen. xliii. 9. Chap. xlv. 32. Prov. xi. 15. Job xvii. 3. 2 Kings xviii. 23. and elsewhere.

<sup>p</sup> Jer. xxx. 21.



is given to our Saviour in other scriptures. Thus, 'I will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them;'<sup>q</sup> and, 'They shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day,'<sup>r</sup> that is, when they are converted in the latter days, they shall adhere, and give divine worship, to the Messiah, whom their fathers rejected. Now it is this 'David, their King,' who is said to have 'engaged his heart to approach unto God.' Then, in the words immediately following,<sup>s</sup> God reveals himself, as a Covenant-God, to them; which is the consequence of Christ's engaging his heart to approach to him, 'Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.' Now this proves an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son: the Father wills or determines that he shall draw near or approach to him as a surety, and the Son consents, in that he has engaged his heart to do it; and all this with a design that his covenant should be established, and that he should be a God to his people.

There is another scripture which proves, from several expressions used in it, that there was a federal transaction between the Father and the Son. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.'<sup>t</sup> This is, beyond dispute, spoken concerning our Saviour; for it is applied to him in the New Testament.<sup>u</sup> Here God the Father calls him 'his Servant,' intimating that it was his will, or, to use the mode of speaking which is generally applied to covenants between man and man, that he stipulated with him, that he should perform the work which he engaged in as Mediator. To this work he is said to be 'called in righteousness.' And, with respect to his human nature, in which he performed it, he is styled 'God's elect,' as foreordained to it, and the person 'in whom his soul delighteth,' as glorified by him in the faithful discharge of it. That he might not fail in it, God promises 'to hold his hand, and keep him;' and, as the result of his accomplishing it, he promises 'to give him for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.'

Another scripture to the same purpose, is Isa. xlix. 8, 9. which also appears to be spoken to Christ, not only from the context, but from the reference to it in the New Testament.<sup>x</sup> 'In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.' Here we have a plain intimation of his being ordained by the Father to perform that work which he was engaged in as Mediator. His being 'given for a covenant of the people,' signifies his being sent into the world, in pursuance of a covenant which had respect to the salvation of his people.

There is another scripture to our purpose, in which our Saviour, speaking to his disciples, says, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;'<sup>y</sup> or, I confer the blessings of this kingdom upon you, in a covenant-way, as my Father hath appointed me to do, in that eternal covenant which passed between him and me.

Again, there are several rewards which were promised to him, as the consequence of his discharging the work committed to him. Some of these respected that glory which belongs to his Person as Mediator; and others, more especially, respected the salvation of his people, and in this, the success of his undertaking. Thus it is said, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.'<sup>z</sup> In the context, also, several other things are said relating to the event and consequence of his performing the work he was engaged in.

Moreover, as he was called to this work, or as it was, as we formerly showed, the result of the Father's will that he should perform it; so we have elsewhere an ac-

q Ezek. xxxiv. 24.

r Hos. iii. 5.

s Ver. 22.

t Isa. xlii. 1, 6.

u Matt. xii. 18—21.

x 2 Cor. vi. 2.

y Luke xxii. 29. διατιθεμαι υμιν, παλως

διδεσθαι μοι ο πατηρ μου, βασιλειαν.

z Isa. liiii. 10.

count of his own consent, implying that it was the result of his own will, as well as of his Father's. Thus it is said, 'Mine ears hast thou opened,'<sup>a</sup> or bored, alluding to a custom used under the ceremonial law, by which the willing servant was signified to be obliged, by his own consent, 'to serve his master for ever.'<sup>b</sup> Thus God the Father engaged Christ, if I may so express it, to perform the work of a Mediator; and then we have an account of his consent, when he says, 'Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.' This mutual consent is expressed also in Isa. l. 5, 'The Lord God had opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious; neither turned away back.'

Further, Christ is represented as making a demand, or insisting on the accomplishment of what was stipulated in this covenant; and this he had a warrant to do from the Father: 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'<sup>c</sup>

These, and many other scriptures of a similar nature, sufficiently prove the doctrine, that there was an eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, relating to the redemption and salvation of the elect. This implies more than his being merely 'foreordained' to perform the work he was engaged in, as he is said to have been.<sup>d</sup> That alone would not have proved that there was a federal transaction between the Father and him; since it may be said of any one who is engaged in works of an inferior nature, that God, who called him to perform them, foreordained that he should do them. But when it is said, concerning our Saviour, that he engaged in the work of our redemption, as the result, not only of his Father's will, but of his own, and so consented to do whatever was incumbent on him as Mediator, the statement certainly argues that there was an eternal covenant between the Father and him with relation to this matter, so far as we may be allowed, when we speak of any transaction between two divine Persons, to retain any of the ideas taken from human covenants.

There is but one scripture more that I shall mention. This, though some will not allow that it relates to the subject, if duly considered as to its scope and design, together with its connection with the foregoing words, may probably appear to be of some weight to confirm the doctrine. The passage is Zech. vi. 13, in which it is said, 'The counsel of peace shall be between them both.' Some, indeed, understand these words as referring to Joshua and Zerubbabel, and as signifying their mutual consent to promote the peace and welfare of the church. But this cannot reasonably be concluded to be the sense of the text. Zerubbabel is not mentioned in the chapter; nor are any two persons spoken of in it to whom the words can be applied except Jehovah and the Branch, that is, the Father and the Son, who are mentioned in the foregoing words. Christ, who is called 'the Branch,' is said 'to build the temple of the Lord,' and to be 'a Priest upon his throne;' and the work in which he was engaged, and the royal dignity to which he was advanced, are both said to be the result of a counsel, or federal transaction, which was between them both. If it be objected, that this counsel of peace respects only the harmony which there is between Christ's priestly and kingly offices, as both of them have a reference to our salvation, we reply that this interpretation cannot well agree with the meaning of the word 'counsel,' which implies a confederacy between two persons, and not the tendency of two offices, executed to bring about the same end. If it be further objected, that the grammatical construction of the words does not favour the sense which we give of them, inasmuch as they contain an account of something that was future, and not from all eternity; we reply, that it is no uncommon thing, in scripture, for that to be said to be which appears to be. Thus it is said, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ;'<sup>e</sup> that is, he hath, by his raising him from the dead, *demonstrated* him to be 'both Lord and Christ,' which, in reality, he was from all eternity. So, in this text, when it is said that 'the counsel of peace shall be between them both,' signifies, that Christ's building the temple and bearing the glory, and sitting as a priest upon his throne, is a plain evidence or demonstration, that there was a counsel or covenant between the Fa-



ther and him from all eternity, relating to the peace and welfare of his people, who are the spiritual house that he builds, and the subjects whom he governs, defends, and saves.

*Distinctions as to the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace.*

We have thus considered the federal transaction which was between the Father and the Son. Now, as this is called, in the Answer, 'the covenant of grace,' it may be necessary for us to inquire whether it be a distinct covenant from that which God is said to enter into or make with man. This covenant is said, indeed, to be made with Christ, as the Head of his elect. But it may be inquired, whether there be not also another covenant, styled the covenant of grace, which is made with the elect, as parties concerned in it.

Every one conversant in the writings of those who treat on this subject, will observe that divines often distinguish between the covenant of redemption and that of grace. The former they suppose to be made with Christ, in the behalf of his elect; the latter, in which all spiritual blessings founded on Christ's mediation are promised and applied to them, they suppose to be made with them. Accordingly, they say that the covenant of redemption was made with Christ more immediately for himself; and that the covenant of grace is made with believers for Christ's sake. In this respect they suppose that these are two distinct covenants; and they explain themselves in several particulars as follows.—1. In the covenant of redemption, made with Christ, there were several promises given, which more immediately respected himself. Some of these related to those supports and encouragements which he should receive from the Father, which were necessary in order to his being carried through the sufferings that he was to undergo; such as that God 'would hold his hand, that he should not fail, or be discouraged.'<sup>f</sup> Others respected that mediatorial glory which should be conferred upon him, when his sufferings were finished, such as 'Ought not Christ to have suffered, and to enter into his glory?'<sup>g</sup> 'He hath a name given him which is above every name,'<sup>h</sup> and many other promises to the same effect. Besides these, there were promises made to him, respecting his elect; that 'he should have a seed to serve him';<sup>i</sup> that 'he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied'; and that God 'would divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong,'<sup>k</sup> or that his difficult undertaking should be attended with its desired success, that so it might not be said he died in vain. In the covenant of grace, on the other hand, which they suppose to be distinct from that of redemption, God promiseth forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, through Christ; or that that should with great advantage be restored to us by him, which we lost by our fall in Adam; and that all the blessings which we stand in need of, for the beginning, carrying on, and completing the work of grace in us, and for making us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, should be freely given us. Now, as these promises are made to the elect, the covenant, in which they are contained, is called 'the covenant of grace,' and so distinguished from the covenant of redemption.—2. In the covenant of redemption, as they farther explain it, the elect, on whose account it was made, were considered as to be redeemed by Christ. But in the covenant of grace they are to be considered as redeemed by him. Hence the covenant of redemption is antecedent, or subservient, to the covenant of grace.—3. They farther suppose, that the conditions of the covenant of redemption, on which the promises made in it were founded, are what Christ did and suffered in his own person; whereas faith, wrought in us, is generally styled by them a condition of the covenant of grace. As such, faith is variously explained, as we shall have occasion to observe under the next Answer, in which it is said to be required as the condition to interest believers in the covenant. In this respect, among others, the covenant of redemption is often explained as a distinct covenant from that of grace.

I confess, I am not desirous to offend against the generation of those who have

so insisted on this subject as not to advance any doctrine derogatory to the divine perfections, or subversive of the grace of God displayed in the covenant. I am inclined to think, as some have done, that this controversy may be compromised; for if we duly weigh those distinctions which are necessary to be considered, it will appear to consist in little more than different modes of explanation, used by those who in the main intend the same thing. I shall humbly offer my thoughts about this matter in four particulars.

1. It is to be allowed, on all hands, that the covenant of redemption, as some style it, is a covenant of the highest grace, so far as it respects the advantages which the elect are to receive from it. It is a wonderful instance of grace, that there should be an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son relating to their salvation; and that in this transaction he should promise to Christ, that, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings, he would give grace and glory to them. And it is allowed by all who have just notions, either of the covenant of redemption or that of grace, that he did make such a promise.

2. It must be farther allowed on both sides, whether it be supposed that the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption are distinct covenants or not, that salvation, and all the blessings which we generally call privileges of the covenant of grace, have their foundation in this transaction between the Father and the Son; so that, if there had not been such a covenant, which some call a covenant of redemption, we could have had no promise of these privileges made in the covenant of grace.

3. As there is nothing promised or given in the covenant of grace, but what is purchased and applied by Christ; so there is nothing promised to Christ in the covenant of redemption, as some style it, but what, some way or other, respects the advantages of his people. Whatever was stipulated between the Father and the Son, in that covenant, was with a peculiar regard to their salvation. Did Christ, as their surety, promise to pay that debt which was due from them to the justice of God? This must be considered as redounding to their advantage. Was there a promise given him, as was formerly observed, that God 'would hold his hand, that he should not fail, or be discouraged,' till he had finished the work that he came about? This also must be supposed to redound to our advantage; as hereby our salvation is secured, which it could not have been had he sunk under the weight of that wrath which he bore. Was there a promise given him that he should, after his sufferings, 'enter into his glory?' This also redounds to the advantage of the elect; for it not only consists in his being freed from his sufferings, and having some personal glories put upon him, but in his going thither to prepare a place for them, and in order that they should be brought there 'to behold his glory.' It is considered also as a pledge and earnest of their future happiness; and accordingly he says to them, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'<sup>1</sup>

4. When we consider this covenant as made with Christ, whether we call it the covenant of redemption or the covenant of grace, we must look upon it as made with him as the Head and Representative of his elect, and consequently as made with them, as is observed in this Answer, as his seed. Hence, if the question be only this, Whether it be more or less proper to call this two covenants, or one? I will not contend with those who, in compliance with the common mode of speaking, assert that they are two distinct covenants. Yet I would rather choose to call them two great branches of the same covenant; one of which respects what Christ was to do and suffer, and the glory which he was to be afterwards possessed of; and the other, of which more immediately, respects that salvation which was to be treasured up in him, and applied by him to his elect. I cannot but think, therefore, that what is contained in this Answer, that the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the Head, and, in him, with the elect as his seed, is a very unexceptionable explanation of this doctrine.



*The Covenant of Grace as made with Man.*

We frequently read in scripture of God's entering into covenant with man, and man with him. This is next to be explained in such a way as is consistent with the divine perfections. In order to our doing so, we, in our entrance on this subject, inquired into the grammatical sense of the word covenant,<sup>m</sup> and into its common acceptation in scripture when applied to any transaction between God and man. We showed that, however there may be stipulation and restipulation, and thereby a passing over of mutual rights from one party concerned to the other, in covenants between man and man; yet that this cannot, consistently with the glory of God, and that infinite distance which there is between him and the creature, be affirmed of the covenant of grace. We also produced some scriptures to prove that the main thing to be considered in that covenant is God's promising to his people the blessings which accompany salvation. Other scriptures might have been quoted to the same purpose; in which, when God is said to make a covenant with his people, we read of nothing but promises of temporal or spiritual privileges which he would confer on them. Thus, when he made a covenant with Abraham, he says, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.'<sup>n</sup> Elsewhere he says, 'This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'<sup>o</sup> We might consider, also, the description of the covenant, as 'a covenant of promise,'<sup>p</sup> and of the persons interested in it, as 'the children of promise.'<sup>q</sup> Nevertheless, God has ordained that, pursuant to this method of applying the promises of the covenant, none should have ground to expect to be made partakers of them, but in such a way as tends to set forth his infinite sovereignty and unalienable right to obedience from his creatures, which they are bound to perform, not only as subjects under a natural obligation to obey the divine law, but as persons laid under a superadded engagement by the grace of the covenant. These statements will prepare the way for what may be farther said, in order to our understanding the meaning of those scriptures which speak of God's entering into a covenant with man, and man with him.

1. Let it be observed, then, that when God entered into a covenant with Christ as the Head of his elect, this included his entering into covenant with them, as is stated in this Answer; so that they have their respective concern therein in all things, excepting what relates to his character as Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, and those peculiar branches of this covenant which, as was before observed, belong only to himself, which some call the covenant of redemption, as distinct from the covenant of grace. From this we may, without any strain on the sense of words, infer that the same covenant which was made with him was, in that peculiar branch of it which respected the elect, or as regards privileges which they were to receive from him, made with them. This is very agreeable to, and tends to explain, the apostle Paul's peculiar and frequent mode of speaking concerning believers being 'crucified with Christ';<sup>r</sup> 'dead,'<sup>s</sup> 'buried,'<sup>t</sup> 'quickened' or 'risen,'<sup>u</sup> and made to 'sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus';<sup>x</sup> as denoting their being made partakers, as his members, of the benefits arising from Christ's sufferings and glory, as really as though they had suffered, and were now actually glorified with him.

2. As the covenant of grace is sometimes, for the reasons formerly mentioned, called a covenant of promise, we may easily understand that God's entering into covenant with his people, signifies his giving, or making known to them, those great and precious promises contained in the covenant which have a more immediate reference to their salvation. On the other hand, his keeping covenant with them, implies his bestowing on them the blessings promised in it. This is otherwise called, his 're-

<sup>m</sup> See Section, 'Difference between a Human Covenant and the Covenant of Grace.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. xv. 18.

<sup>o</sup> Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

<sup>p</sup> Eph. ii. 12.

<sup>q</sup> Gal. iv. 28.

Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>s</sup> Rom. vi. 8.

<sup>t</sup> Ver. 4.

<sup>u</sup> Col. ii. 12. compared with chap. iii. 1.

<sup>x</sup> Eph. ii. 6.

membering his holy covenant,'<sup>y</sup> or his 'performing the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he had sworn unto them from the days of old.'<sup>z</sup> Sometimes also it is called his 'showing them his covenant,'<sup>a</sup> not merely in a way of revelation, but by special application of the blessings contained in it; and his 'bringing them into the bond of the covenant,'<sup>b</sup> that is, engaging or obliging them to obedience, from the constraints of his love and grace, manifested in the promises of this covenant, so that now they are doubly bound to be his, not only as he is their Creator and Sovereign, but as he has made them, by this federal transaction, the peculiar objects of his favour and grace.

3. When God is pleased, as he often is, to annex to the covenant a demand of faith, repentance, or any other graces, to be exercised by those who may claim an interest in its blessings, his doing so is agreeable to that feature of the covenant, formerly mentioned, by which it is denominated an establishment, or divine appointment, or, as it is sometimes called, 'a statute.'<sup>c</sup> This feature respects the connexion of the graces with salvation; or the indispensable obligation of those who hope to attain salvation to possess the graces. It is, however, rather a consequence of God's entering into covenant with them, than an antecedent condition stipulated by him; for the latter would infer a kind of suspense in him, whether he should fulfil his promise or not till the conditions were performed. This is the principal thing we object to when we except against the use of the word 'stipulation' with relation to this subject. If nothing were intended by this word, but the necessary connection which God has ordained between the blessings promised and the grace demanded in the covenant,—and some understand it only in this sense—I would not contend about persons using or laying aside an improper, and, I think I may say, unscriptural mode of speaking.

Having considered the meaning of God's entering into covenant with man, we shall now proceed to inquire what we are to understand by those scriptures which speak of man's entering into covenant with God. Such a mode of speaking we have, when Moses says to the people, 'Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.'<sup>d</sup> Elsewhere it is said, 'The people entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their soul;'<sup>e</sup> and 'Josiah made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant, that were written in this book; and all the people stood to the covenant.'<sup>f</sup> This is a most solemn transaction, and includes the very essentials of practical religion; so that it is necessary for us to inquire what we are to understand by it. As scripture is the best interpreter of itself, and parallel texts give light to each other, we may observe what is said elsewhere, upon a similar occasion, where God speaks of some who 'choose the things that please him, love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, and take hold of his covenant.'<sup>g</sup> To enter into covenant, is thus to take hold of God's covenant,—to embrace the blessings promised therein. Accordingly, the apostle says of those 'who died in faith,' that though they 'had not received the promises,' or the blessings promised, yet 'having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them, and embraced them.'<sup>h</sup> Again, as we receive the blessings of the covenant by faith; so, to enter into covenant with God, implies a professed dedication of ourselves to a Covenant-God, with a due sense of our obligation to yield that obedience to which we are thereby engaged, or a declaration that we pretend not to lay claim to the blessings of the covenant, without being enabled, by his grace, to comply with its demands. This is sometimes expressed by 'swearing to the Lord:' 'Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.'<sup>i</sup> As God, when he enters into a covenant with man, is sometimes said to swear to him, or to confirm his promise by his oath, on which account the covenant of grace is sometimes called 'his oath,' as in one of the scriptures formerly

y Luke i. 72.

z Micah vii. 20.

a Psal. xxv. 14.

b Ezek. xx. 37.

c Numb. xviii. 19. Psal. i. 16.

d Deut. xxix. 10—12.

e 2 Chron. xv. 12.

f 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

g Isa. lvi. 4, 6.

h Heb. xi. 13.

i Isa. xlv. 23.



mentioned, and in others which might have been referred to ;<sup>k</sup> so, our entering into covenant with him, is our swearing fealty, as subjects do to their princes, whereby they own them to be their rightful governors, and themselves under an obligation to serve them.

This is farther explained by that solemn transaction which passed between God and his people, in the close of the ministry and life of Moses ;<sup>1</sup> from which we may understand what is meant, in other places, by God's entering into covenant with them. This is expressed by his 'avouching them to be his peculiar people, as he had promised them, and that they should keep all his commandments ;' that is, he conferred this privilege upon them with the view that they might reckon themselves under the highest obligation to be obedient to him. Then we have an explanation of man's entering into covenant with God, when it is said, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God ;' that is, 'Thou hast publicly declared, that thou art willing to be subject to him, as thy covenant God, and pursuant to this, hast expressed a ready inclination to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his voice.' This is such an entering into covenant as is incumbent on all who expect its blessings. And if any one, when he uses the word in explaining the doctrine, intends nothing more than this by restipulation, I will not contend with him ; yet as it is to use the word without its proper ideas, which others annex to it, I humbly conceive the doctrine may be better explained without it.

<sup>k</sup> Luke i. 72, 73.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.

[NOTE 3 H. *The Covenant of Grace*.—What most theological writers, including Dr. Ridgeley as well as some eminent men who have written voluminously on the subject, say respecting the covenant of grace, or rather respecting the *covenants* connected with the plan of redemption, is so deeply tinged with the systematizing spirit of the schoolmen, that one fails to use it as a lucid or distinct medium of discerning the simple statements of the divine word. I shall extract a short passage from Dr. Russell, which may probably aid a humble Christian's conception of the doctrine of the covenant of grace as taught in scripture, more than many entire large treatises which have been written. "The redemption of mankind was the subject of an eternal purpose ; and this purpose was originally revealed in the form of a promise. For 'it is written in the volume of the book,' Psal. xl. 7, or in the commencement of the revelation of mercy, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent ; and, in many subsequent promises, the same blessed truth is declared. It was the eternal purpose of the one Jehovah, that the Word should become incarnate, and, in human nature, effect the redemption of mankind by the sacrifice of himself. Hence, the manifold wisdom of God is said to have been revealed in the plan of salvation, 'according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,' Eph. iii. 11. In his eye, the eternal Word was from everlasting considered as Emmanuel, and hence we are said to be saved 'according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,' 2 Tim. i. 9. As the Lamb of God, Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world ; but it was only in these last times that he was made manifest for us, 1 Pet. i. 20. To God all things are, and must ever have been present ; and accordingly, the things which he hath purposed are represented as if existing from the very date of his purpose. But still the purpose and the execution of it are in themselves quite distinct ; the latter being the subsequent consequence and result of the former. In reference to the promissory form in which the revelation of mercy was first made, eternal life is said to have been promised by God before the world began ; because all in relation to the plan of redemption was then fully determined, and of this determination the promise of redemption was but the transcript and development.

"God having revealed his purpose of mercy in the form of a promise, the plan of redemption is denominated a covenant. That which the scriptures call the covenant of God, his covenant of peace, and the new and everlasting covenant, is just the gospel of his grace, in connexion with the blood of Christ, as the ground on which it proceeds, and the medium through which its blessings are dispensed. And of this the other covenants recorded in scripture were so many signs and pledges. In particular, when we read in scripture of the old and the new, or of the first and the second covenants, the reference is to the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, Gal. iv. 24—26 ; Heb. vii. 22 ; viii. 6—13 ; ix. 15—23 ; xii. 24 ; Matt. xxvi. 28. And when the latter is denominated 'the everlasting covenant,' the reference is to its everlasting duration, as distinguished from the temporary nature of the former, Heb. xiii. 20. The old covenant stood related to the new as its type or figure, and was therefore subservient to the latter as that in which it met its ultimate design ; and hence it vanished when the second was established, Heb. vii. 18, 19 ; viii. 13. But the latter shall never wax old, or vanish away, as did the former ; and it is on this account that it is said to be everlasting."—*A Familiar View of the Old and New Covenants*, By David Russell, D.D., Dundee, pp. 13—15.—Ed.]

## THE DISPLAY OF GRACE IN THE COVENANT.

QUESTION XXXII. *How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant ?*

ANSWER. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces, and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed to salvation.

As the covenant which we have begun to consider is called the covenant of grace, it is necessary for us to show in what respects the grace of God is manifested in it.

1. We observe, then, that life and salvation, which are very comprehensive blessings, containing all that sinful creatures stand in need of, are promised in the covenant. Hereby the grace of God is more eminently illustrated than it was in the first covenant; in which, though life was promised, there was no promise of salvation or of the recovery of a forfeited life. Life is brought to light only by the gospel; which contains a glorious discovery of the grace of this covenant. The blessings promised in it are grace here and glory hereafter. These are contained in that promise, 'I will be a God to thee;' that is, 'I will deal with thee in such a way as that all my divine perfections shall contribute to thy happiness.' Sometimes, also, when God reveals himself as a covenant God, he promises, as he did to Abraham, that 'He will be their shield, and their exceeding great reward.'<sup>m</sup> There are promises likewise respecting the forgiveness of sin; as when God says, 'I, even I, am he that bloteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.'<sup>n</sup> That we may see this in its utmost extent, the apostle says as much as can be expressed in words; when, speaking of the consequence of God's being a covenant God to his people, he informs them, 'All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.'<sup>o</sup>

2. Man could not have been made partaker of the invaluable blessings contained in this covenant, without the interposition of a mediator. He no sooner rebelled against God, than he was separated from his presence, and deprived of all those blessings which he might otherwise have expected; and on the other hand, the holiness and justice of God obliged him to testify his displeasure against him, whereby he was utterly excluded from all hope of obtaining any blessings from him. The perfections of the divine nature rendered it necessary that a satisfaction for sin committed should be insisted on; and this could not be given by man in his own person, nor could he reasonably expect that God should receive him into favour without it, he having rendered himself guilty in his sight, and so liable to condemnation. Hence, as he could do nothing which had any tendency to repair the injuries which he had offered to the divine justice, if ever he have access to God and acceptance in his sight, it must be in and through a mediator. This leads us to consider what we are to understand by a mediator, and what was to be done by him in order to the procuring of this favour.

A mediator, in general, is one who interposes between two parties that are at variance, in order to make peace. This he does, either by endeavouring to persuade the party offended to lay aside his resentment and forgive the injury, which is a less proper sense of the word; or else by making an overture of satisfaction, as an inducement to his doing so. In the former sense, it would have been an affront to the divine Majesty, and an injury to his justice, for any one to desire that God should be reconciled, without a satisfaction given; in the latter, we are to understand the word 'Mediator,' when applied to Christ in this Answer. He is, therefore, to be considered not merely as a Mediator of intercession, or as pleading that God would remit the debt, out of his mere sovereignty or grace, but as a Mediator of satisfaction, or a Surety, entering into an obligation to answer all the demands of justice. In this respect, he is the Mediator of the covenant, whereas, when he is sent by God to



reveal, or make known the blessings of the covenant to man, he is styled, 'The Messenger of the covenant.'<sup>p</sup> It was possible for a mere creature to perform the work of a mediator in the lower and less proper sense of the word, or, provided satisfaction were given to the justice of God, to intercede with him for the sinner, or entreat him to turn away from the fierceness of his wrath, which sin deserved. In this sense Moses is styled a mediator, and in no other.<sup>q</sup> So some understand that text as spoken of him in which the apostle says of the law, that it was ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator.<sup>r</sup> Agreeably to this, Moses says, 'I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid, by reason of the fire.'<sup>s</sup> Elsewhere, also, after Israel had sinned in worshipping the golden calf, he says, 'You have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.'<sup>t</sup> Not that he was to be accounted a mediator of satisfaction; for the atonement which he hoped to make was by entreaty or humble supplication, that God would not destroy them, as they had deserved. This I call a less proper sense of the word 'Mediator.' In this Answer, on the other hand, Christ is styled a Mediator, in the same sense in which he was a Redeemer, or Surety, for man, or made a proper atonement to procure reconciliation between God and man by his blood. But more will be said on this subject, when we speak concerning Christ's priestly office.

3. It is a very great instance of grace, that God should admit of a Mediator, who might have exacted the debt of us in our own persons, and, as we were unable to pay it, might have punished us with everlasting destruction. That he was not obliged to admit of a Mediator, will appear if we consider the nature of the debt due from us. We were obliged to perform perfect obedience, or to suffer punishment; and hence he might have refused to allow of this being performed by another, in our stead. In this case, it is not as when pecuniary debts are paid, which cannot be refused by the creditor, though paid by one who is the surety for the debtor. As, however, this subject will be more particularly considered when we speak concerning the satisfaction which Christ, as our great High Priest, gave to the justice of God, all that we shall add concerning it, at present, is, that it was an instance of that grace which was displayed in the covenant, in which Christ is considered as a Mediator of satisfaction.

4. The grace of God farther appears, in his not only admitting of a Mediator, but in his providing one. It was impossible for fallen man to find out any one who would so much as plead his cause, or speak a word in his behalf, till satisfaction were first given; and no mere creature could pay unto God a ransom that was worthy of his acceptance, or available to answer the end designed. If the best of creatures had undertaken the work, it would have miscarried in his hands. How deplorable and hopeless, then, must the condition of fallen man for ever have been, if God had not himself found out the expedient to bring about our redemption! This was a blessing unthought of and unasked for by man. I will not deny that man might have some ideas of the divinity and glory of the second Person in the God-head. For the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed to him, while in a state of innocence, as it was necessary that it should be, in order to his worshipping each of the divine Persons; and I doubt not that he retained some ideas of it when fallen. But it may be questioned whether he knew that it was possible for the Son of God to be incarnate. Or suppose, for argument's sake, that he had some idea of the possibility of this, yet he could never have known that the Son was willing to submit to this astonishing instance of condescension, and thereby to put himself in the sinner's room, that he might procure that redemption which was necessary for him. This mystery of the divine will was hid in God: it could never have been known by man without revelation; and consequently would not have afforded him any matter of relief in his deplorable state. How wonderful, therefore, was the grace of God, that he should find out this expedient, and lay help on One that is mighty, or provide one to do that for man which none else could have done!

p Mal. iii. 1.

q Such a one is more properly called Internuncius than Mediator.

r Gal. iii. 19. Vid. Bez. and Whitby in loc.

s Deut. v. 5.

t Exod. xxxii. 30.

We may add, that it was no less an instance of divine grace, that God the Son should consent to perform this work for man. His undertaking it was without the least force or compulsion; for that would have been inconsistent with his consenting to becoming a Surety for us, and as such, to suffer in our room and stead, since all punishment must either be deserved by him who bears it, or else be voluntarily submitted to. The former can by no means be said of Christ; for a personal desert of punishment is inconsistent with his spotless purity, and would have rendered the price laid down by him for our redemption invalid. Hence, he voluntarily condescended to engage in this work. He gave his life a ransom for many; and his doing so is considered by the apostle as a peculiar display of grace: 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.'<sup>u</sup>

5. This Mediator being provided for man, without his desert or expectation, we proceed to consider him as offered to him, and, together with him, life and salvation. The great design of the gospel is to discover or make an overture of Christ and his salvation to man. Without this, the gospel could not be preached, nor a visible publication made of the grace of the covenant which it contains. But as the overture of grace, or the call of God to accept of and embrace Christ as offered in the gospel, is more particularly considered under a following Answer,<sup>u</sup> we shall reserve the farther consideration of this matter to that place.

6. It is farther said, in this Answer, that the grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in his 'requiring faith as the condition to interest' believers in Christ. This expression may be allowed, or excepted against, according to the method taken to explain it. We shall endeavour to show what it means; and shall point out in what sense we deny the covenant of grace to be conditional. We shall next inquire, whether there be not another sense, agreeable to the divine perfections, in which these words may be understood as well as other expressions of a similar nature, in which faith is styled a condition, and which are frequently used by divines.

Now a person's having an interest in Christ, implies his having a right to claim him, as his Mediator, Surety, Advocate, and Saviour, and with him all those spiritual blessings which are purchased and applied by him to those whom he has redeemed; so that such an one may say, on good grounds, 'Christ is mine, together with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in him.' Here let it be considered, that it is one thing to say, that Christ is the Redeemer and Saviour of man, or, in particular, of his elect, who are given to him that he may save them; and another thing for a person to say, He is my Redeemer or Saviour. The former is a truth founded in scripture-revelation. Accordingly every one may say, as Moses expresses it, 'Yea, he loved the people,'<sup>y</sup> or his peculiar chosen people; or, as the apostle says, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.'<sup>z</sup> But he who has an interest in Christ, has a right to claim him as his Saviour, and therefore may say, with the apostle, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.'<sup>a</sup> This I rather choose to express, by a believer's having a right to claim him as his Saviour, than by his being actually enabled so to do; inasmuch as many have an interest in Christ, who are destitute of that assurance which would give them a comfortable sense of it in their own souls.

We are now to consider how faith is said to be required, as the condition to interest us in Christ; or how far this expression may be qualified and explained, without asserting any thing derogatory to the glory of God or the grace of the covenant. The word 'condition,' though often used when we speak of contracts between man and man, as an essential ingredient in them, is not so plainly contained in those explanations of the covenant of grace which we have in scripture; and, whenever we use it with a particular application to this, we must understand it in such a sense as is agreeable to the divine perfections.

Now, that we may compare these two senses of the word 'condition,' in order to our determining how far, in explaining this doctrine, it may be used or laid aside, let us consider that in human covenants, in which things are promised on certain con-



ditions, these conditions are supposed to be possible to be performed ; otherwise the promise depending on the performance of them is rendered void, and contains no other than a virtual denial to make it good. Thus the king of Israel did not, at first, understand the message sent him by the king of Syria requiring of him to heal Naaman of his leprosy, as a condition of peace and friendship between them ; and the inference he makes from it was, that he had a design to seek a quarrel against him. And his reasoning would have been just, had it been intended in this sense ; since the condition was not in his own power. Moreover, if a master should tell his servant, that he would give him a reward, in case he would perform the work of ten days in one, the servant would conclude nothing else from it, but that he was resolved not to give him any thing. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, we must consider whether faith, when it is a condition of the covenant of grace, be in our own power or not. There are some external acts of it, indeed, which are so ; but these are too low to be deemed conditions of salvation, or of the blessings of the covenant of grace. As for those acts which are supernatural, and the effects of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, though they are inseparably connected with salvation, yet they are not in such a manner in our power that we may conclude them to be proposed as conditions, in the same sense as those things are said to be, which are properly conditions. In this respect, the covenant of grace, as to the conditionality of it, differs from the covenant of innocency. In the latter covenant, perfect obedience, which was the condition of it, was so far in man's power, that he could have performed it without the superadded assistance of divine grace. But when, on the other hand, perfect obedience is considered as a condition of fallen man's 'entering into life,' in which sense our Saviour's reply to the young man's question<sup>b</sup> is understood by many, a plain intimation is made that eternal life is not to be obtained in this way, inasmuch as the condition is impossible.

Again, when conditions are insisted on in human covenants, it is generally supposed that, though it be possible for the person who enjoins them to assist and enable him who is under this obligation to perform them, yet he will not give him that assistance ; for, if he does, the contract can hardly be reckoned conditional, but absolute. Thus, if a creditor should tell an insolvent debtor, that he will discharge him, provided he pay the debt, and, at the same time, gives him to understand that he will supply him with a sum of money which shall enable him to pay it, the transaction is altogether the same as if he had discharged him without any conditional demand of payment. This I cannot but mention, because there are some persons, who speak of faith as a condition of the covenant of grace, and, at the same time, take it for granted, that it is not in our own power to perform it ; and who, because God has promised that he will work it in us, conclude it to be conditional,—though such a promise renders the covenant absolute, or, at least, not conditional in the same sense in which human covenants are ; and they infer only, what we do not deny, that there is a necessary connection between that grace which God will enable us to perform, and salvation which he has promised in the covenant.

Further, when any thing is promised to another on condition that he do what is enjoined on him, it is generally supposed to be a dubious and uncertain matter whether this condition shall be fulfilled, and the promise take place ; or, as I may express it, every condition contains, not a necessary, but an uncertain connection between the promised advantage and the duty enjoined. The reason of this is, that all human covenants depend on the power and will of men, who are under conditional engagements to perform what is demanded in them ; that, as these are supposed to be mutable and defective, as far as they are so, the performance of the condition may be reckoned dubious ; and that he who made the promise is liable to the same uncertainty, whether he shall make it good or not. This view of the matter will hardly be denied by those who defend the other side of the question ; who, in explaining the nature of human liberty, generally suppose that every one who acts freely, might do the contrary. They must hence conclude,

that, if the performing of the conditions of a covenant be the result of man's free-will, it is possible for him not to perform them; and that, therefore, it must be a matter of uncertainty, whether a person who promises a reward on the performance of these conditions will confer it or not. But, however this may be applied to human covenants, we are not to suppose that faith or any other grace, is in this respect, a condition of the covenant of grace; as though God's conferring the blessings promised in it were dependent on the will of man, as determining itself to the exercise of these graces. In this respect, we cannot but deny that the covenant of grace is conditional.

Again, if we take an estimate of the worth and value of a condition enjoined, the advantages which he who enjoins it expects to receive from it, or the reference which the performance of it has to the procuring of the blessing promised, in which case the person who has fulfilled it may be said to possess merit, or to have in himself whereof to glory, as to the part he has performed; these things must not be applied to any transaction between God and man, and are wholly to be excluded from those ideas which are expressed by the word 'condition' when applied to the covenant of grace. This will be allowed by most who do not acquiesce in the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works. Concerning the worth and value of faith, and all other graces, I would not be thought in the least to depreciate them, or to divest them of that excellency which they have above all other effects of God's power and blessings of providence; for certainly we ought to bless God for them, or glory in him as the author of them. That which we would guard against in this matter, is nothing more than what our Saviour guards us against, when he says, 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.'<sup>c</sup> I would not have any one suppose, that whatever condition is performed by us has such a value put on it that, on the ground of it, eternal life is due to us in a way of debt; which would make way for boasting. The conditions, indeed, which Christ performed in that branch of the covenant which more immediately respected himself, which some call the covenant of redemption, were properly meritorious; and the blessings he purchased thereby were given him in a way of debt, and not as an undeserved favour. But if we suppose that, in faith or in any other grace possessed by us, there is the same reference to the salvation which we expect, we turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, and resolve that into ourselves which is due to God alone.

Many excellent divines, however, have asserted faith to be a condition of the covenant of grace, who do not understand the word 'condition' as meaning either anything dubious or uncertain on the one hand, or anything meritorious on the other. They probably choose to express themselves so in compliance with custom, and to explain away the common ideas of the word 'condition' as applied to human covenants, rather than altogether to lay it aside. It may be, also, that they do this, lest they should be thought to deny the necessary connection between faith and salvation. I shall, for the same reason, conclude this Head, by stating a few propositions, whereby our not using the word 'condition' may be vindicated from any just exception, or our using it may not appear to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, or the grace of the covenant.

We lay it down, then, as an undoubted truth, the denial of which would be subversive of all religion, that faith and all other graces are required by God, and that our obligation to possess them is indispensable. Whether our possessing them be reckoned a condition of the covenant or not, it is no less a duty. Some, indeed, distinguish between the obligation of a law and that of a covenant; the former of which depends on an express command, while the latter is the result of some blessings promised or conferred, and has the obligation, but not the formal nature, of a law. They accordingly conclude, that we are commanded by God, as a Lawgiver, to believe and repent; but that it is more proper to say, we are engaged by him, as a covenant God, rather than commanded, to exercise these graces. But this dispute is rather about the propriety of words, than the substance of the doctrine itself. I shall, therefore, enter no farther into it, but content myself with the



general assertion, that faith and all other graces are necessary duties, without which, to use the apostle's expression, 'it is impossible to please God,'<sup>d</sup> or to have any right to the character of Christians.

Again, faith and all other graces are to be considered also as blessings promised in the covenant of grace. This appears from those scriptures which speak of them as 'the gifts of God,'<sup>e</sup> purchased by the blood of Christ, founded on 'his righteousness,'<sup>f</sup> and wrought in us by his Spirit, and 'the exceeding greatness of his power,'<sup>g</sup> and as discriminating blessings, which all are not partakers of. 'All men,' says the apostle, 'have not faith.'<sup>h</sup> Our proposition may be farther argued, from what Christ undertook to purchase for and apply to his people, as their federal head. In pursuance of his work in this capacity, all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, are bestowed on them, in him; and the covenant is made good to them, as God is said, 'together with Christ, to give them all things.'<sup>i</sup> First, Christ is given for a covenant of his people; and then, upon his fulfilling what he undertook to procure for them, all that grace which is treasured up in him is applied to them. Hence, faith and other concomitant graces are covenant-blessings.

Further, there is a certain connection between faith and other concomitant graces, and salvation. This we considered elsewhere, together with the sense of those scriptures which seem to be laid down in a conditional form, whence the arguments to prove the conditionality of the covenant of grace are generally taken.<sup>k</sup> All that we shall add, at present, is, that since, in the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, it was agreed, established, and, on our Saviour's part, undertaken, that the elect should be not only redeemed, but sanctified, and enabled to exercise all grace, before they are brought to glory, this is made good to them in this covenant; and that, therefore, as the consequence of Christ's purchase, faith and all other graces are wrought in the souls of those who afterwards, in receiving the end of faith, are brought to eternal salvation; so that we may as well separate Christ's undertaking to redeem his people from their attaining salvation, as we can separate from it his applying those graces which accompany salvation. When, however, we speak of these graces as connected with salvation, we must not conclude that they are the cause of it. Though we are saved in a way of believing, we are not saved for our faith. I cannot, therefore, but approve of what is observed by many divines who treat of this subject, that these graces are the way to heaven, while Christ's righteousness is the cause of our going thither.<sup>l</sup> I am sensible there are persons who express their dislike of some of the most unexceptionable modes of speaking, if not altogether agreeable to those which they make use of; and who can hardly approve of any one's asserting, that faith and other graces are the way to salvation, partly, because they are the beginning of salvation, and principally, because Christ styles himself, 'The way.'<sup>m</sup> But though grace is glory begun, it may as truly be said to be the way to complete salvation, as the traveller's setting out and going forward on his journey is the way to the end of it, without which it can never be attained; and though Christ is the way to salvation, as every thing which tends to fit us for it and bring us to it is founded on what he did for us as Mediator; yet this does not, in the least, overthrow the connection of grace with glory, in the method in which he brings his people to it, by first working faith and all other graces in them, before the work is brought to perfection, or the top-stone thereof is laid.

Further, if we assert more than this, namely, that faith is a condition of the covenant of grace, or, as it is expressed in this Answer, a condition to interest believers in Christ, we must distinguish between God's bestowing the blessings of the covenant of grace, pursuant to his secret will or his eternal purpose, and our having a visible ground or reason to claim an interest in them. The former of these cannot be supposed to be conditional, without making God dependent on our act; the latter may, and, I think, ought, to be deemed so. Thus faith is a condition, or an internal qualification, without which no one has a warrant to conclude his

d Heb. xi. 6.

e Eph. ii. 8.

f 2 Pet. i. 1.

g Eph. i. 19.

h 2 Thess. iii. 2.

i Rom. viii. 32.

k See Sect. 'The Eternity, Wisdom,

Secrecy, Absoluteness, and Unchange-

ableness of the purpose of Election,' under Quest. xii. xiii.

l The former of these is generally

styled, *via ad regnum*; the latter, *causa regnandi*.

m John xiv. 6.

interest in, or lay claim to, the saving blessings of the covenant of grace. Hence, when it is said to be a condition to interest believers in Christ, we are to understand it as that which evinces our claim to him, or which gives us ground to conclude that we are redeemed by him, and to expect that he will bestow upon us complete salvation. To deny this, would be to suppose that an unbeliever has a warrant to conclude that Christ loved him and gave himself for him, or that he shall be saved by him. But that is a doctrine which I cannot but oppose with the greatest detestation, as what contains an unwarrantable presumption, and leads to licentiousness; which, I hope, nothing that has been said on this subject has the least tendency to do. We have thus considered how faith may be said to be a condition of our laying claim to an interest in Christ.

7. We proceed to consider how the grace of God is glorified, in his having ordained that we should apprehend or discern our interest in Christ, and in the blessings of the covenant, by faith. Of all graces, faith is that which has the greatest tendency to discover to the soul its own vileness and nothingness. Indeed, every thing which we behold in Christ its object, has a tendency to abase us in our own sight. Do we, by faith, behold Christ's fulness? This has a tendency to humble us, under a sense of our own emptiness. Do we look on Christ as the Fountain of all righteousness and strength? This leads us to see that we are destitute of these in ourselves. So that, as faith beholds all that we have or hope for, as being founded on and derived from Christ, and gives us, in consequence, the greatest sense of our own unworthiness, it is, in its own nature, adapted to advance the grace of God. Hence, God, in requiring faith as an instrument to apply the blessings of the covenant, ordained the best expedient to illustrate and set forth his own grace, as displayed in the covenant.

8. But as it is a very difficult matter to believe, the grace of faith being the gift and effect of the power of God, we are now to consider that the grace of the covenant is farther manifested, in God's having promised, and, consequently, in his giving, his Holy Spirit to work faith and all other graces which are connected with it or flow from it. That we have, in the covenant of grace, a promise of the Holy Spirit, to work in us that grace which God requires, is very evident. He says, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications.'<sup>n</sup> Elsewhere God promises to 'pour his Spirit upon their seed, and his blessing upon their offspring.'<sup>o</sup> This is farther set forth, in a metaphorical way, when he promises to 'sprinkle clean water' on his people, and that 'he would cleanse them from all their filthiness, and from all their idols, and give them a new heart, and put a new spirit within them, and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh.'<sup>p</sup> All this is said to be done by 'his Spirit,' which he promised 'to put within them.'<sup>q</sup> More particularly, the Spirit, as working faith in the hearts of believers, is called, for that reason, 'The Spirit of faith';<sup>r</sup> and all other graces are called, 'The fruit of the Spirit.'<sup>s</sup> Hence these graces are from the Spirit, as the Author of all grace; and they proceed from faith, as one grace tends to excite another. Thus the heart is said 'to be purified by faith';<sup>t</sup> which is said also 'to work by love';<sup>u</sup> and to be that whereby we are enabled 'to overcome the world.'<sup>v</sup> It also produces all holy obedience, which is called, 'The obedience of faith.'<sup>w</sup> Thus concerning the Spirit's working faith, and all other graces.

It is added, that the truth and sincerity of faith is evidenced, as well as the grace of faith wrought, by the Spirit. This also is a blessing promised in the covenant of grace. Hereby we are enabled to discern our interest in Christ, and our right to all the blessings which accompany salvation. In this respect, 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he shows them his covenant.'<sup>x</sup> He discovers to them, not only that there is such a dispensation of grace in general, but that they have a right to the blessings promised in it; and accordingly 'seals them unto the day of redemption.'<sup>y</sup> They are thus enabled to walk comfortably, as

<sup>n</sup> Zech. xii. 10.

<sup>r</sup> Gal. v. 22, 23.

<sup>x</sup> Psal. xxv. 14.

<sup>o</sup> Isa. xlv. 3.

<sup>s</sup> Acts xv. 9.

<sup>y</sup> Eph. iv. 30.

<sup>p</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

<sup>t</sup> Gal. v. 6.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 13.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. xvi. 26.



knowing in whom they have believed, and are induced to the greatest thankfulness, as those who are under the highest obligations to God, who promises and bestows these blessings, and all others whereby his grace is abundantly manifested in this covenant.

## THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

QUESTION XXXIII. *Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner?*

ANSWER. The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner; but the administrations of it, under the Old Testament, were different from those under the New.

QUESTION XXXIV. *How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?*

ANSWER. The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were, for that time, sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

QUESTION XXXV. *How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?*

ANSWER. Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was, and still is to be, administered in the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's supper, in which grace and salvation is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.

HAVING considered the nature of the covenant in which God has promised salvation to his people, and how his grace is manifested in it, we proceed to speak concerning the various dispensations of it, or the way in which God has been pleased, from time to time, to discover and apply the blessings contained in it, for the encouragement of his people to hope for salvation. This he has done 'at sundry times, and in divers manners.'<sup>z</sup> The first method of administration was before Christ's incarnation; the other, in all succeeding ages, to continue to the end of the world.

### *The Administration of the Covenant under the Old Testament.*

Let us consider, then, how the covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament. [See Note 3 I, page 470.] As God has always, even in the earliest ages, had a church in the world, which has been the seat of his special presence, and been favoured with the displays of his glory; so he has made known and applied to them the blessings of salvation, or the promises of this covenant in which they are contained. How he has done so, is particularly considered in this Answer. Here there is something supposed, namely, that it was absolutely necessary, for the salvation of the elect, that God should, some way or other, reveal Christ to them, by whom they were to obtain remission of sins. He was to be the object of their faith, as well as the fountain of their blessedness; and this he could not have been, unless God had taken some methods to lead the world into the knowledge of his Person, and of that work he designed to engage in, whereby they who lived before his incarnation might be encouraged to look for the benefits which he would procure by what he was to do and suffer. Now, that he has done so, and that the method which he has taken was sufficient to build up his elect in the faith of the promised Messiah, is what we are particularly to consider.

I. We shall first show that God revealed Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, to his church of old. There were two ways by which he did this. One was by express words, or by an intimation given from heaven, that the Messiah, the Prince of life, should, in the fulness of time, take our nature and dwell among us,—and that what he was then to be and do, should be conducive to the salvation of those who lived before his incarnation, as much as though he had appeared from the beginning of the world. The other method was by types, or sig-

nificant ordinances, which were only different ways of discovering the same important doctrines.

1. God revealed Christ to come to the Old Testament church, by promises and prophecies. He did this, that, though they were not at that time to behold him as manifested in the flesh, they might take a view of him by faith; and that he might be rendered the object of their desire and expectation, so that his coming might be no unlooked for event, but the accomplishment of those promises and predictions which related to it. Thus God told Abraham, not only that he should be blessed with a numerous offspring, but that, 'in his seed,' that is, in the Messiah, who should descend from him, 'all the nations of the earth should be blessed.' He likewise said to Israel, by Moses, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from among thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.'<sup>a</sup> In following ages, also, there were promises and predictions which gave farther light concerning the person and offices, the sufferings and glory of the Messiah. Accordingly, it is said, 'To him gave all the prophets witness.'<sup>b</sup> The prophet Isaiah is so express, in the account he gives of this matter, that he is styled by some, the evangelical prophet. What he says concerning him, is as particular as if it had been an history of what was past, rather than a prophecy of what was to come. He foretells that he should 'be born,' or 'given' as a public blessing to the world; and describes him, not only as having 'the government upon his shoulders,' but as having the perfections of the divine nature, which discover him fit for that important trust. He styles him, 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'<sup>c</sup> As he speaks of his birth, so he intimates that he should be 'born of a virgin.'<sup>d</sup> He describes him<sup>e</sup> as condescending to bear our sins, as standing in our room and stead, designing hereby to make atonement for them. He speaks of him, as 'brought like a lamb to the slaughter,' and 'cut off out of the land of the living, making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.' He states that, after this, 'he should prolong his days,' and that the consequence should be glorious to himself, and of the highest advantage to his people. He also describes him elsewhere,<sup>f</sup> in a most elegant manner, as one triumphing over conquered enemies, 'travelling,' or pursuing his victories, 'in the greatness of his strength,' and making it appear that he is 'mighty to save.' Another prophet speaks of him as 'a Branch' that should grow out of the root or stock of David, when it was almost dead and dry, and that he should set up a more glorious throne, and exercise a government over his people in a spiritual way.<sup>g</sup> The prophet Micah gives us an account of the very place of his birth; and speaks of Bethlehem, as rendered famous and renowned by his being born therein 'who should be a Ruler in Israel,' though otherwise it was 'little among the thousands of Judah.'<sup>h</sup> Another prophet signifies that he should come at a time when God would 'shake all nations,' that is, fill the world with civil commotions, and cause it to feel the sad effects of those wars whereby the kingdoms of the world had been disjointed, and many of them broken in pieces. 'Then,' says the prophet, 'the Desire of all nations shall come, and fill his house,' that is, the second temple, 'with glory.'<sup>i</sup> The prophet Daniel speaks of him as the Messiah, or Christ, the character by which he was most known when he was on earth; and gives a chronological account of the time when he should come, and 'be cut off, though not for himself,' and hereby 'confirm the covenant,' and, at the same time, 'cause the sacrifice and oblation,' that is, the ordinances of the ceremonial law, 'to cease,' and so make way for another dispensation of the covenant, namely, that which we are under, which was to succeed in the room of the other.

2. The covenant of grace was administered also by the various types and ordinances of the ceremonial law. These were all significant signs of that grace which should be displayed in the gospel, and which was to be obtained by Christ. Many of the types and ordinances were instituted before the whole body of the ceremonial law was given from mount Sinai. The first we read of was that of sacrifices, which were offered in the first ages of the world; whereby mankind had an early intima-

a Deut. xviii. 15.

b Acts x. 43.

c Isa. ix. 6.

d Chap. vii. 14.

e Chap. liii.

f Chap. lxiii. 1, &c.

g Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

h Micah v. 2.

i Hag. ii. 7.



tion given them of the blood of the covenant, which should be shed to expiate sin. After this, circumcision was instituted. It was first given to Abraham, as a visible mark or 'token of the covenant,' immediately before the birth of Isaac, the promised seed, at the time when God was pleased to enter into covenant with him;<sup>k</sup> and it was continued in the church, throughout all generations, till our Saviour's time; and is explained by the apostle, as having been a sign or 'seal of the righteousness of faith.'<sup>l</sup> Another type was the passover. This was instituted in commemoration of Israel's departure out of Egypt; and had in it many significant rites and ceremonies, whereby our redemption by Christ was set forth. On this account, the apostle calls him 'our Passover, who is sacrificed for us;'<sup>m</sup> and, in allusion to it, he is styled, 'The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'<sup>n</sup> There were many other ceremonial ordinances or types which God gave to the Jewish nation, which were significant representations of the grace that was to be displayed in the gospel. As is stated in this Answer, they foreshadowed Christ then to come; or as the apostle expresses it, they were 'a shadow of good things to come.'<sup>o</sup> They all pointed at the grace of the covenant, or the accomplishment of what was to be performed by Christ after his incarnation. This, however, will be more particularly considered, when we speak, under a following Answer,<sup>p</sup> of the ceremonial law, as distinguished from the moral. At present, we shall only consider the types in general, and their reference to the grace of the covenant, whereby the Old Testament church were led into the knowledge of the Messiah then to come, together with what he was to do and suffer, in order to purchase and apply the blessings of this covenant to his people.

Here we shall show that there were typical ordinances under the ceremonial law. This we are obliged to maintain against those who have advanced several things relating to the origin of the ceremonial law, which tend very much to divest it of its spirituality and glory.<sup>q</sup> They assert, that all the rites and ordinances of that law were derived from the Egyptians; that they were observed by them before they were known and received by the church; and that the reason why God accommodated his law to them, was that he knew how tenacious they were of that religion in which they had been trained in Egypt, and how difficult it would be for them wholly to lay it aside, and to adopt another way of worship altogether foreign to it. They say, however, that he cut off or separated from it every thing which was idolatrous, and adapted other things to the Egyptian mode of worship which he thought most conducive to his glory. But though he commanded his people, when they left Egypt, to borrow vessels of silver and gold to be used in the service they were to perform in the wilderness; far be it from us to suppose, that God, in ordaining the ceremonial law, borrowed any part of it from the Egyptians. It is true, there were rites of worship used by the Egyptians, and other nations, which had some affinity with the divine law, and were received by them, in common with other heathen nations, by tradition, from the church in former ages. Nor can it be denied, that the Israelites sometimes corrupted the worship of God, by introducing some things into it which were practised by neighbouring nations. But God gave no countenance to this matter, by accommodating his law to theirs. Since, however, this has been purposely and largely insisted on, with much learning and judgment, by others,<sup>r</sup> I shall pass it over.—There are others, who make farther advances, tending to overthrow that which appears to be the main design of the ceremonial law, together with the spiritual meaning of it. These conclude that the main end of God's giving it to the Jews was its being necessary that there should be some form of worship erected; that had it not been given them, they would have invented one of their own, or practised that which they had received from the Egyptians; and that the more pompous and ceremonious it was, and especially the nearer it came to that of neighbouring nations, it would the more readily be received and complied with. They conclude, also, that there was no design in it to typify or shadow forth Christ or the blessings of the covenant of grace; and that the things enjoined by it were commanded duties,<sup>s</sup> whereby the people

<sup>k</sup> Gen. xvii. 9, 10.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. iv. 11.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. v. 7.

<sup>n</sup> John i. 29.

<sup>o</sup> Heb. x. 1.

<sup>p</sup> See Quæst. xcii.  
et Marsham Can. Chron.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Spencer, de Leg. Hebr.; et ejusd. Dissert. de Urim et Thummim;

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Witsii Ægyptiaca

<sup>s</sup> Præcepta observantia.

were to be kept employed, but not typical ordinances. But it is very strange that any who have read some explanations of the ceremonial law occasionally mentioned in the Old Testament, and especially the large comment on it, given by the apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, should embrace this opinion.

Whatever ordinances were typical, respected Christ, his person, his offices, the grace of the covenant, and the way of salvation by him. I cannot approve, therefore, of what I occasionally meet with in some ancient commentators and modern writers, who sometimes speak of things being typical of other things besides Christ and what relates to the work of redemption. Some, for example, speak of the notoriously wicked persons mentioned in scripture, as Cain, Pharaoh, and others, as types of the devil; and of Antiochus Epiphanes, as a type of Antichrist. Others speak of some things as types of gospel-ordinances: they call circumcision a type of baptism, and the passover a type of the Lord's Supper. Several writers amongst the Papists, also suppose that the bread and wine which were brought forth by Melchizedek to Abraham, were a type of the Eucharist, as they call the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Others speak of Noah's being saved in the ark from the deluge, as a type of baptism. These are misled by a mistaken sense of the word used by the apostle when, after having spoken of Noah's being saved in the ark, he says, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us,' &c. But the meaning of the Greek word<sup>u</sup> is not that this was a type of baptism, but that it signified, as baptism also doth, that salvation which we have by Christ.

When we consider what was typified by the ordinances under the ceremonial law, we must avoid two extremes, namely, that of those who make more types than the Holy Ghost designed in scripture, and that of others who will not acknowledge many things to be types which plainly appear to be so. The former give too great scope to their wit and fancy, when they reckon every thing to be a type which may be adapted to Christ and the gospel-state. They, accordingly, suppose many persons, and actions done by them, to be typical, which it is hard to prove were designed to be so, or were looked upon as such by the Old Testament church. It would be a difficult matter, for example, to prove that Samson, especially in any other respect than as he was a Nazarite, was a type of Christ. But if it could be proved, that the success he sometimes had in his skirmishes with the Philistines was a type of Christ's victories over his and our enemies; yet it does not appear, though some have extended the parallel so far, that his carrying the door and posts of the gate of Gaza to the top of a hill which is before Hebron,<sup>x</sup> signifies Christ's resurrection. And it is abominable when any one supposes, as some have unwarily done, that his loving a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah,<sup>y</sup> was a type of Christ's loving the Gentile church. But as I would not give any occasion to conclude that I have light thoughts of the performance of some, who have explained many things, which they call types, in scripture, with a very honest and good design to lead the world into the knowledge of several great gospel-truths, I shall take leave to distinguish between those things which were plainly designed in scripture to be types, and some others which, though it does not appear that they were looked upon as such by the Old Testament church, may be accommodated to illustrate or explain some doctrines contained in the gospel. If any one call these methods of illustration types, because there is some analogy or resemblance between them and Christ or the benefits of the covenant, they may extend their illustrations as far as they please; I will not contend with them. It is not their saying that such and such things are similitudes by which Christ may be set forth, but their asserting that these similitudes were designed by God to be ordinances for the faith of his church, to lead them into the knowledge of Christ, which I militate against, when I suppose that some are chargeable with an extreme in extending this matter too far, which, it is certain, many have done.

But this may give occasion to inquire when we may determine that a thing is designed by God, to be a type of Christ and the grace of the covenant. Now, as to persons, or, as it is commonly expressed, personal types, though I cannot say that every one whose life and actions bear a very great resemblance to some things which



are remarkable in the life of Christ, is a type of him, in any other sense than as we are led, by the analogy or resemblance of things, to speak of it in a way of accommodation or illustration; yet we have some directions given us, by which we may conclude some persons to be types of Christ. One of these is, when he is called by their name. Thus our Saviour's being called David, in several scriptures,<sup>c</sup> and David's speaking in the Person of our Saviour in several of his Psalms, seem to intimate that he was looked upon, by the church in his day, as a type of Christ. Moses also seems to imply as much concerning himself, when he speaks of Christ, as a 'Prophet, whom the Lord God should raise up from among their brethren;' for he adds, that he should be 'like unto him,' and consequently typified by him.<sup>a</sup> The apostle seems to intimate this when he compares Moses and Christ in point of faithfulness, that 'the one was faithful as a servant' in God's house, the other 'as a Son over his own house.'<sup>b</sup>—Again, when any remarkable actions were done by persons mentioned in scripture which were allowed to be typical, it follows that the persons who were appointed to be God's ministers in doing them were types of Christ. Accordingly, we may conclude Joshua to have been reckoned by Israel a type of Christ, in leading them into the land of Canaan, upon the same ground that they regarded that land as a type of the gospel-rest, which we are brought to by Christ. For the same reason, Solomon might be called a type of Christ, as he built the temple, which was reckoned, by the Jews, a type of God's presence, in a way of grace with his people. There are also other passages in scripture which might be referred to as proof that he was a type of Christ.<sup>c</sup>—Moreover, nothing is more evident, than that the priests under the law, who were ministers in holy things, and the high priest, in a way of eminency, were types of Christ. They are so considered in the explanation of the types given in the epistle to the Hebrews. They appear to have been so, from the fact that their ministry was typical, or that the gifts or sacrifices which they offered were types of what was offered by Christ for our redemption.

There were also types called real, or things done, as ordinances designed to signify the grace of the covenant. These were either occasional or stated. The former were designed for types, at the times when the things were performed; but do not appear to have been so in succeeding ages. Such were the passage of the Israelites through the Red sea, their being under the cloud, their eating manna in the wilderness, and their drinking the water which came out of the rock. All these things are expressly mentioned by the apostle as types.<sup>d</sup> We may add to them the brazen serpent, which was plainly a type of Christ, and which, as such, was applied by our Saviour to himself.<sup>e</sup> But all these were occasional types, or were ordinances to the church no longer than the action was continued. There were other things, however, which seemed to be standing types or ordinances, in all successive ages, till Christ, the Antitype, came. Such were circumcision, the passover, sacrifices, and other rites of worship, used in the temple-service. These things being expressly mentioned in scripture as types, we have ground to determine them to be so.

II. We are now to consider, that the method which God took in the administration of the covenant of grace, under the Old Testament, was sufficient to build up his elect in the faith of the promised Messiah. There were, indeed, many types given to the church; but these would not have led them into the knowledge of Christ, and of salvation to be obtained by him, unless God had taken some method to explain them. They had not a natural tendency to signify Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, as words, according to the common sense of them, have to make known the ideas they convey. Their signification was, for the most part, if not altogether, instituted, or annexed to them by the divine appointment; and many of them had not the least resemblance, in themselves, to what they were ordained to signify. It was necessary, therefore, that they should be explained. We may say the same thing of a type which is said of a parable; for both are

<sup>a</sup> Hos. iii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. <sup>b</sup> Deut. xviii. 15. <sup>c</sup> See Psal. lxxii. the title, compared with the scope of the psalm, which speaks of Christ in the person of Solomon. <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. x. 1, 3, 4. compared with ver. 11. <sup>e</sup> John iii. 14.

figurative representations of some less known ideas which are designed to be conveyed by them. Now a parable is styled, by the psalmist, 'a dark saying;' <sup>f</sup> and, by the prophet Ezekiel, 'a riddle.' <sup>g</sup> Our Saviour, speaking of it in this sense, tells his disciples that 'unto them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables.' <sup>h</sup> They are elsewhere opposed to a plain way of speaking; as when the disciples say, 'Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb,' <sup>i</sup> or parable, as the word is rendered in the margin. When Nathan reproved David for his sin, in the matter of Uriah, he first represented it by a parable, taken from the rich man's robbing the poor man of his ewe-lamb. The meaning of this, before he explained it, was not understood by David; <sup>k</sup> but when he told him, 'Thou art the man' intended hereby, it was as evident to him as if he had made use of the most significant words. The same may be said concerning types under the Old Testament dispensation. They would have been unintelligible, had there been no explanation annexed to them, whereby their spiritual meaning might be understood. And if we consider them as a part of religious worship, we cannot suppose that that consisted only in some bodily exercises, such as killing of beasts, sprinkling the blood, &c.; for that is no part of religion, any otherwise than as it refers to things in which religious worship more immediately consists, and leads the faith of those who are engaged in it into the knowledge of these.

But this argument having been insisted on elsewhere, <sup>l</sup> and the necessity of God's leading his church into the meaning of the ceremonial law having been considered and proved from the divine goodness, and a brief account having been given of the method which God took to lead them into it, which tends to obviate any objection that might be made against it, we shall only observe, at present, that as there is a very clear explanation given of the ceremonial law, in several places of the New Testament, so there are some expressions used in the Old which seem to refer to its spiritual meaning. Now, if it be allowed, as there is ample reason to do, that the church had then an intimation given them, either by some hints contained in scripture, or by some other methods of revelation, that there was a spiritual meaning affixed to the ceremonial law, it follows that they might easily have applied a general direction to particular instances, and have attained a very great degree of the knowledge of the spiritual meaning of these types and ordinances. That this may farther appear, let it be considered that they were led into several doctrines relating to the Messiah, and the offices which he was to execute as Mediator, by express words. These were such that they must have been given up to a very great degree of judicial blindness, as the Jews are at this day, if they could not understand by them many of those great truths which relate to the way of salvation by Christ. Now, if they were led into them by this more plain method, they might easily accommodate the typical ordinances to it; so that the one would be a key to the other. Thus, when they were told by the prophet Isaiah, of the Messiah's 'bearing the iniquity' of his people, or of 'the Lord's laying on him the iniquity of us all,' <sup>m</sup> they might easily understand that the same thing was signified by some rites used in sacrificing; as the priest laying his hand on the head of the sacrifice before he slew it, and the sacrifice being, in consequence, said 'to bear the iniquity of the congregation.' <sup>n</sup> They could not be at a loss as to the spiritual meaning of this; and when we read elsewhere such expressions as plainly refer to the thing signified by some ceremonial ordinances, such as, 'the circumcision of the heart,' <sup>o</sup> 'the calves of the lips,' <sup>p</sup> 'the sacrifice of thanksgiving,' <sup>q</sup> and many others of a similar nature, it cannot reasonably be supposed that they were wholly strangers to their meaning. The types and ordinances, therefore, were, in an objective way, sufficient to build them up in the faith of the Messiah.

This being considered, it may very evidently be inferred that, as is farther observed, they had full remission of sins and eternal life. It is not necessary to suppose, with some of the Pelagians and Socinians, that they might be saved without the

<sup>f</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 2.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 1—6.

with Chap. xvi. 21, 22.

<sup>g</sup> Ezek. xvii. 2.

<sup>l</sup> See under Quest. iii.

<sup>o</sup> Deut. xxx. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Luke viii. 10.

<sup>m</sup> Isa. liii. 4, 6.

<sup>p</sup> Hos. xiv. 2.

<sup>i</sup> John xvi. 29.

<sup>n</sup> Lev. iv. 4. compared

<sup>q</sup> Psal. cxvi. 17.



knowledge of Christ; nor, with the Papists, that they were incapable of salvation, till Christ came and preached to them after his death, and discharged them from the prison in which they were detained; nor with some among the Protestants, that the bondage of the Old Testament church was such that they were not fully justified, but lay under a perpetual dread of the wrath of God, and so had not complete forgiveness. This last opinion we often meet with in the writings of many who, in other respects, explain the doctrine of the covenant of grace in a very unexceptionable way. Here I cannot but observe, what is well known by those who live in the United Netherlands, that this matter has been debated with so much warmth in those parts, as to have occasioned divisions and misunderstandings among divines, who, in other respects, have adhered to, and well defended the doctrines of the gospel against those who have opposed them. The judicious and learned Cocceius, whom I cannot but mention with the greatest respect, who lived about the middle of the last century, has been and is now followed by many divines in those particular modes of explaining this doctrine which he makes use of. His sentiments, indeed, about this matter, were not wholly new; but having written commentaries on several parts of scripture, he takes occasion to explain great numbers of texts, agreeably to that particular scheme which he maintains. While, on the one hand, he runs great lengths, in explaining what he reckons to be scripture-types and predictions, and thereby gives great scope to his wit and fancy; on the other hand, he extends the terror, bondage, and darkness which the church was under, during the legal dispensation, farther than can well be justified, and advances several things, in defending and explaining his scheme, which many divines, who do not give in to his way of thinking, have excepted against. Instead of making but two dispensations of the covenant of grace, according to the commonly received opinion, he supposes that there were three.<sup>r</sup> The first, he says, was from God's giving to our first parents immediately after they fell, the promise, relating to the seed of the woman that should break the serpent's head, to his delivering the law from mount Sinai. This dispensation, he adds, had nothing of terror or bondage in it, any more than the dispensation which we are under; and he supposes that the church had clearer discoveries of Christ, and the blessings of the covenant, than they had after Moses' time. The second dispensation he says was that which was established when God gave Israel the law from mount Sinai. This he generally describes as a yoke which they could hardly bear, and sometimes as a curse, a rigorous dispensation, in which there was a daily remembrance of sin. The reason which he assigns for God's exercising this severity, and shutting them up in a judicial way under terror, darkness, and bondage, is that they revolted from him, by worshipping the golden calf, a little before the law was given. On this occasion, he says, God put a vail upon his ordinances, covered the mysteries of the gospel by types, and, at the same time, did not lead them into their meaning; and this, as was before observed, would have a tendency to leave them in a state of darkness, as to the great doctrines which were signified by these types and ordinances of the ceremonial law. This he supposes to be the meaning of what the apostle says concerning the double vail; one put on the things themselves, the other on the hearts of the Jews. He says that both these were typified by the vail which Moses put over his face;<sup>s</sup> and that this darkness was attended with distress and terror of conscience, whereby they were, as the apostle says elsewhere, 'all their life-time subject to bondage,'—words which he explains to refer to the church of the Jews under the legal dispensation. He adds, that all this continued as long as that dispensation lasted, or till it was succeeded by the third, or gospel-dispensation which we are under; whereby the church was delivered from this yoke, which 'neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.'

Now, they who follow this scheme seem to make the terror, bondage, and darkness which the church was under, greater than they ought to do; for I humbly conceive that all those scriptures which they refer to for proof, are to be taken,

<sup>r</sup> The first he and his followers call, 'Oeconomia promissionis,' or 'ante-legalis;' the second, 'Oeconomia legalis;' the third, 'Oeconomia evangelica.'

<sup>s</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 13—15.

<sup>t</sup> Heb. ii. 15.

not in an absolute, but in a comparative sense. It is one thing to say, that this dispensation was less bright and comfortable than the present dispensation is; and another thing to say, that it was so dark and comfortless as they generally represent it to be.—I cannot but think, as I have already observed, that the church of Israel had a clearer discerning of the meaning of the ordinances of the ceremonial law, than these divines will allow them to have had; or at least, that the veil which was upon their hearts, principally respected a part of them, and that in some particular ages, not in every age, of the Jewish church. For some of the Old Testament saints seem to have discovered a great degree of light in the doctrines of the gospel; as appears more especially from several of the Psalms of David, and some of the writings of the prophets.—Again, whatever degree of judicial blindness the church of the Jews might be exposed to for sin, it does not clearly appear that it was inflicted on them as a punishment for worshipping the golden calf at the foot of mount Sinai. There were several instances of idolatry and apostacy from God which gave occasion to it; and when they repented of, and were reformed from these, the effects of his wrath were taken away. We are not to suppose, therefore, that the ceremonial law was given, at first, as a yoke or curse laid on them for this sin in particular.—Nor are we to extend the bondage and darkness of the ceremonial law so far with respect to any of them, as to suppose, that, under that dispensation, they had not full remission of sin. The contrary of this seems to be stated in several scriptures. Thus it is said, ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.’<sup>u</sup> ‘There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.’<sup>x</sup> ‘Thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee; thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.’<sup>y</sup> ‘Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.’<sup>z</sup> These and similar scriptures seem so plainly to overthrow this part of their scheme, that they are obliged, in defence of it, to understand them all as containing only a prediction of that blessedness which the New Testament church should receive, and not as describing a privilege which was enjoyed under the legal dispensation. This I cannot but think to be an evasive perversion of the sense of the scriptures just referred to, and others of a similar nature. It is plain that the apostle, referring to one of them, namely, the words of the psalmist,<sup>a</sup> says that therein David ‘describes the blessedness that cometh not on the circumcision only,’ that is, not only on the Jews, ‘but on the uncircumcision also,’ that is, the gospel-church. This is a plain argument, that the blessedness which accompanies forgiveness, was a privilege which the Old Testament church enjoyed, and not merely a promise of what the New Testament church was to expect. The apostle’s reasoning is as if it had been said, ‘Were the Old Testament church the only blessed persons in enjoying forgiveness? No; as they formerly enjoyed it, so we who believe are made partakers of the same privilege.’

We may add, that, in consistency with their scheme, the followers of Cocceius entertain some unwarrantable notions about the justification of the Old Testament church. Some say that it was less full; others, which is a more unguarded way of speaking, that it was less true.<sup>b</sup> Agreeably to their opinion, the latter suppose that the Old Testament church had no other ideas of the doctrine of justification, than as implying the divine forbearance, or not punishing sin; though they had a perpetual dread that it would be punished at last, and no comfortable sense of the forgiveness of it.<sup>c</sup> But this is certainly to extend the terror and bondage of that dispensation farther than we have just ground from scripture to do, whatever turns

u Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.

x Psal. cxxx. 4.

y Psal. lxxxvi. 5. and lxxxv. 2.

z Micah vii. 18, 19.

a Rom. iv. 6. compared with ver. 9.

b Minus plena, or minus vera.

c For the proof of this, they often refer to that scripture, Rom. iii. 25, in which it is said, ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through,’ or after, ‘the forbearance of God.’ This they suppose to contain an intimation of the privilege which the gospel church enjoyed, namely, remission of sins; that while,



they give to several texts in its defence. We must conclude, therefore, as is observed in this Answer, that the Old Testament church had full remission of sins, as well as eternal salvation.

*The Administration of the Covenant under the New Testament.*

We are now to consider the covenant of grace, as administered under the New Testament. This is the dispensation of it which we are under, and is to continue to the end of the world, and which, by way of eminence, we call the gospel-dispensation. Concerning this dispensation, it is observed that it began when Christ, the substance, was exhibited.

1. He is called the substance of it, without any particular limitation of the word. We may understand that he was the substance of the ceremonial law, as all the promises and types of it had a peculiar reference to him: 'To him give all the prophets witness.'<sup>d</sup> Or he may be considered as the substance of the New Testament dispensation, the great topic of the ministry of the gospel. The apostle speaks of 'Christ crucified,' as the principal thing which 'he determined to know,' or insist on, in the exercise of his ministry. He said this with good reason; for all gospel doctrines were designed to lead us to him, and set forth his glory, as the fountain and author of our salvation.<sup>e</sup> The seals of the new covenant also, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper, signify that salvation which we enjoy and hope for by Christ, our consecration to him, and our communion with him. He is truly styled the substance of both the dispensations of the covenant. The former looked forward, and pointed out Christ to come, as the object of the church's desire and expectation; the latter represents him as having come, and as being the object of our joy and thankfulness, for the blessings which he has procured for us.

2. This leads us to consider when it was that the New Testament dispensation commenced. This is here said to be upon Christ's being exhibited. Christ's exhibition either implies his public appearing when he 'was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us,' or it has a particular respect to the time when he entered on his public ministry, and went about doing good, confirming his mission by uncontested miracles. This he did immediately after his baptism; whereby he appeared to be the person whose coming the prophets had foretold, and whom John the Baptist had pointed at, and given the world ground to expect that he would immediately show himself to them in a public manner. This appearing of Christ was like the sun's rising after a night of darkness; and in some respects, the gospel-dispensation might be said to begin then. Nevertheless, in propriety of speaking, it could not be said fully to commence till Christ's resurrection. Then it was that the ceremonial law ceased, all the types and ordinances of it having had their accomplishment in him. Thus the prophet Daniel speaks first of Christ's 'being cut off,' and thereby 'confirming the covenant,' and then of 'the sacrifice and oblation ceasing.'<sup>f</sup> When that dispensation was at an end, the gospel-dispensation immediately succeeded it. [See note 3 K, page 470.]

3. We are now to consider how the two dispensations differ. They were, indeed, the same in substance, both before and since the coming of Christ. This we observed, when we considered that the covenant of grace, notwithstanding the different dispensations of it, is but one. Besides, the blessings promised in the covenant were the same, namely, redemption through the blood of Christ, and complete salvation by him. He was the Mediator and fountain of all that happiness which his

under the legal dispensation, there was nothing else apprehended but the forbearance of God, so that the Old Testament church had *παρεῖν ἡμαρτιῶν*, the New Testament church had *αφεῖν*. They all suppose, too, that they looked upon Christ as 'Fide-jussor,' and not as 'Expromissor.' These are terms used in the civil law. The former signifies a person's undertaking to be a surety, and, at the same time, leaving the creditor at his liberty to exact the debt either of him or of the debtor himself; while 'Expromissor' signifies a person's undertaking to be a surety, in so full and large a sense that the debtor is discharged. Hence, say they, as the Old Testament church did not clearly know that God would discharge them, by virtue of Christ's undertaking to be a surety, but concluded that he might exact the debt either of him or of them, there was a foundation laid for that terror and bondage to which they were perpetually subject.

<sup>d</sup> Acts x. 43.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. i. 23; chap. ii. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Dan. ix. 26, 27.

people enjoyed, either before or after his incarnation. Still, however, the way of administering this covenant under the gospel-dispensation differs from the former way.

One difference is, that, before the gospel-dispensation, it was predicted and signified that Christ should come; and, hence, the Old Testament church waited for his appearing. Accordingly, they are represented as saying, 'Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.'<sup>g</sup> But the New Testament church adores and magnifies him, as having appeared 'to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,' and thereby fully to accomplish the work of our redemption. In the preaching of the gospel, he is represented as 'having abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light,' and done every thing for us which is necessary to bring about our redemption. This is signified also by the sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though they may be justly called gospel-types, or external signs of Christ and the blessings of the covenant of grace, yet differ from the types under the ceremonial law, not only in the matter of them, but in their referring to the work of redemption as fully accomplished by him, which the ceremonial law could not, from the nature of the thing, be said to have done.

The gospel-dispensation further differs from the legal, and very much excels it, as grace and salvation are therein held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations. The apostle,<sup>h</sup> when comparing the two dispensations, calls the one 'the ministration of death,' or 'condemnation,' and describes it as now 'done away,' and as what, while it continued, was 'glorious;' the other he calls 'the ministration of the Spirit,' or 'of righteousness,' and speaks of it as 'excelling in glory.' Whether the former is styled, 'the ministration of death,' because of the terrible manner in which the law was given from mount Sinai, on which occasion the people said to Moses, 'Let not God speak with us,' in such a way, 'any more, lest we die,' or whether it is so styled in reference to the many curses and threatenings, denounced in that dispensation to deter the people from sin, we will not determine. But it is certain, that the apostle speaks of the gospel-dispensation, as excelling in glory; and this is the principal thing which we are now to consider.

Now the gospel-dispensation excels, inasmuch as grace and salvation are therein held forth with greater clearness or evidence. This we may truly say, without supposing the legal dispensation to have been so dark, that none of the church, in any age of it, could see Christ and the way of salvation by him to be signified by any of its types or ordinances. We may observe, that, when the apostle speaks of that dispensation, he does not say absolutely that it had no glory, but that 'it had no glory in this respect, by reason of,' or compared with, 'the glory that excelleth.' Now the gospel-dispensation excels the legal, as to its clearness or fulness of evidence, in that the accomplishment of the predictions, or the making good of the promises of redemption and salvation by Christ, affords greater evidence of the truth and reality of these blessings, than the mere giving of the promises could be said to do. For though the one gave them the expectation, the other put them into actual possession, when Christ, the substance, was, as was before observed, exhibited, and the ceremonial law had its accomplishment in him.

Again, under the gospel-dispensation, the grace and salvation revealed in it, are attended with greater efficacy. For the greatest part of the Old Testament church, through the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, were not so much disposed as they ought, especially in some ages, to inquire into, or endeavour to attain a clearer discerning of, the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial institutions; and in consequence of this, there was but a small remnant of them who obtained mercy to be faithful, who rejoiced to see Christ's day, and embraced the promises which they beheld afar off. After the commencement of the gospel-dispensation, on the other hand, 'the word of the Lord had free course, and was more eminently glorified' in those places where it was made known.

This will more clearly appear if we consider, further, that the gospel-dispensation excelled in glory, in regard to extent. It was under this dispensation that the



promise was to have its accomplishment, that Christ should be 'a light to the Gentiles,' and God's 'salvation unto the end of the earth;'<sup>i</sup> or that God would 'destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that was spread over all nations.'<sup>k</sup> It was then that a commission was given to 'preach the gospel to every creature,'<sup>l</sup> or that Christ should be 'preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world.'<sup>m</sup> In this respect, the gospel-dispensation certainly excelleth in glory; and it is owing to this feature of it that we enjoy at present, the invaluable privilege of the gospel. But if the present dispensation be reckoned only the dawn and twilight, or the beginning of that glory which shall be revealed at Christ's second coming, as grace is sometimes styled glory begun; or if the apostle's description of it, when he says, that 'we are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,'<sup>n</sup> contains an intimation, that the glory which still remains to be revealed, is nothing else but the perfection of the present dispensation; then we may conclude that it far excelleth all others in glory.

From what has been said, in comparing the former and present dispensation of the covenant of grace, we may infer the care of God extended to his church in all ages. He never left them without the means of grace; which, how various soever they have been as to the matter of them, have tended to answer the same end, namely, the leading of the church into the knowledge of Christ.—We may farther infer the necessity of external and visible worship. This the church was never wholly destitute of; for then it would have ceased to have been a church.—We may infer, likewise, the necessity of divine revelation, as to what respects the way of salvation by Christ. We must not conclude, that the church was, at any time, without some beams of gospel-light shining into it; or that they were left, as the heathen are, 'to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him;'<sup>o</sup> or that, before the gospel-dispensation commenced, salvation was to be obtained by adhering to the light and dictates of nature, which discovers nothing of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, or of that remission of sin which is to be obtained only through him.—Again, Christ's having been revealed to, and consequently known by, the Old Testament church, as the promised Messiah, may give some light to our understanding what we often read in the New Testament concerning persons believing in him, upon his working miracles or using some other methods to convince them that he was the Messiah; when, at the same time, we do not read of any particular discovery made to them relating to the glory of his Person and offices, and the design of his coming into the world, which was necessary to their believing him, in a saving way, to be the Messiah. Thus when he converted the woman of Samaria, by revealing himself to be 'that Prophet' whom the church expected, and by telling her some of the secret actions of her life, she immediately 'believed in him;'<sup>p</sup> and many of her fellow-citizens believed on him, upon the report that she gave them of what he said.<sup>q</sup> So, also, when he opened the eyes of the man who was born blind, he only asked him this question, 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' and then discovered that he was the Person; and it immediately follows, that the man 'believed and worshipped him.'<sup>r</sup> There are many other instances of a similar nature recorded in the New Testament,—instances in which persons believed in Christ, before he gave them a particular account of his design in coming into the world, merely upon his working miracles, which gave them a conviction that he was the Messiah. Yet faith supposes not only a conviction that Christ is the Messiah, but a knowledge of his Person, and of the offices he was to execute as such. Now, that the individuals in the instances referred to possessed this knowledge, may very easily be accounted for, by supposing that the Jews had been instructed in it, and therefore wanted no new discoveries of it. Accordingly, they believed in him, and worshipped him, being induced to do so, by those intimations which were given to them, under the Old Testament dispensation, that the Messiah, whenever he appeared, would be the object of faith and worship.—Fi-

i Isa. xlix. 6. k Isa. xxv. 7. l Mark xvi. 15.  
o Acts xvii. 27. p John iv. 18, 19, 29.

m 1 Tim. iii. 16. n Heb. xii. 22, 23.  
q Ver. 39. r John ix. 35, 37, 38.

nally, the gospel being more clearly preached under the present dispensation than it was before, tends to aggravate the sin of those who despise Christ as revealed in it. 'This is the condemnation,' says our Saviour, 'that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'<sup>s</sup> Before our Saviour's incarnation, the Old Testament church might be said to reject the covenant of promise, or not regard the gospel contained in it; but, under the New Testament dispensation, sinners reject the covenant of grace, as confirmed, ratified, and sealed by the blood of Christ, and, as the apostle says, 'count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,' and therefore 'are thought worthy of much sorer punishment.'<sup>t</sup>

s John iii. 19.

t Heb. x. 29.

[NOTE 3 I. *The Administrations of the Covenant.*—'The Administration of the Covenant under the Testament,' is an extraordinary phrase. We showed, in a former Note, (See Note 'The Old and the New Testaments,' under Quest. iii.) that the name 'Testament' is a mistranslation of the original word which it is made to represent, and utterly inapplicable to everything which that word designates. But even if the name were allowable, it denotes the very thing which is denoted by the word 'Covenant.' Even Dr. Ridgeley, when contending for the propriety of the name, says, that it ought never to be employed to the exclusion of the word Covenant; that the two names designate the same thing under different phases; and that when the one is used, the other is necessarily implied, See Sect. 'The meaning of the word 'Covenant,' under Quest. xxxi. What, then, can we understand by 'the Administration of the Covenant under the Testament,' but just 'the administration of the Covenant under the Covenant.' Such is an instance—and there are hundreds similar—of the gross confusion of language which results from the systematizing spirit of the scholastic theology. When viewed as exhibitions of the promise of eternal life—exhibitions based on sacrifice, and displaying the security, holiness, and grace of the promise through the blood of the great atonement—the age before and the age after Christ are called, in scripture, 'the Old and the New Covenant;' and when viewed as *administrations* of the promise, or as systems of moral means for explaining and enforcing it,—when viewed, the one as administering the promise by types of the Saviour to come, and the other as administering it by declarations of his having actually appeared and accomplished his work,—they are called in scripture, 'the former and the latter age,' and in popular theology, are not inappropriately termed 'the Mosaic and the Christian Dispensations.'—Ed.]

[NOTE 3 K. *The Date of the Christian Dispensation.*—The Jewish dispensation appears to have been abolished at our Lord's incarnation. 'When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, Lo I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.' Now 'the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' The change of the economy is identified with the change of priesthood, or with the Redeemer's offering sacrifice. Even if, as some divines contend, our Lord's *high* priesthood did not begin till his ascension, yet his work as 'a priest' or sacrificer—all the work which fulfilled the types of the Holy Place and the Court of the Tabernacle—was begun at his incarnation. His making atonement extended from his birth till his 'appearing in the presence of God for us.' It began with the first pain he felt, or the first humiliation he endured, and did not terminate till he 'entered the heavenly places,' and 'purified them with his own blood.' There was no pausing point at the resurrection,—none more proper than at his flight into Egypt, his baptism, his passion in the garden, or his yielding up the ghost on the cross; nothing farther than the extraneous attestation, on the part of the Father, and the evidence exhibited by his own display of power over death, that, as the atoning victim, 'he was the Son of God,' and possessed the energy and moral worth of the 'Eternal Spirit.' Either, therefore, the Jewish economy was abolished when Christ 'came into the world,' when his sacrifice *began*; or it was not abolished till he sat down at the right hand of God when his sacrifice was *completed*. The latter opinion, so far as I know, is adopted by no person; and the former one is the only alternative.

'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' The moral law was 'given,' or re-promulgated by Christ as well as by Moses, and existed in all its force before the ministry of either. 'Grace,' as regards the publication of the divine mercy, and 'truth,' as opposed to error, existed, in the same way, as certainly in the oracles of Moses as in those of the Redeemer. The Mosaic law was a pure, unequivocal, spiritual exhibition of exactly the doctrines of the gospel which are embodied in the discourses of Christ and the writings of his apostles. But the former exhibited them in *shadow*, while the latter exhibited them in *substance*. 'Truth' is opposed, in the divine world, not only to error, but also to uncertainty, anticipation, futurity, or type. Employed to distinguish the gospel from false doctrine, it is opposed to *heresy* or *fable*: but employed to distinguish the ministry of Christ from that of Moses, or the lessons of the New Dispensation from the observances of the Old, it is opposed merely to the rites of the typical economy. These were 'given by Moses,' while the *realities* which they signified 'came by Jesus Christ.' 'Judgment,' in a similar manner, often means the typical dispensation. Now, *when* did Christ 'bring forth judgment unto *truth*?' When did he abolish the economy of types, and introduce the economy of realities? He himself answered the question when he talked with the woman of Samaria: 'Woman,' said he, 'the hour cometh, *and now is*, when the true worshippers shall worship God in spirit and *in truth*—when they shall worship no longer through the carnal and typical me-



dium of Mosaic rites, but with the spiritual feelings and immediate faith of reliance on a Messiah come, and 'sin-offering' abolished. The woman had been convinced of sin; and, adverting to the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, as to the acceptable place of seeking divine remission, she anxiously inquired whether she should make sin-offering at Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim. But Jesus told her that the Messiah, whom all the sin-offerings typified, had already come, and—apparently in consequence of this—that *the hour then was* when true worshippers should neither attend typical places, nor practise typical observances, but simply exercise a spiritual and immediate faith on the Messiah. 'Such,' he added, 'the Father seeketh to worship him.' Thus both the Father's authority, and his, seem to have declared that *then*, while he stood by the well of Jacob, the dispensation of types had been for ever done away.

What but this can explain our Lord's doctrine on the subject of the Sabbath? When the Pharisees accused his disciples of profanation, for plucking ears of corn on that day, he replied, indeed, that their conduct was justifiable, both by the necessity of hunger, and by the approved example of David; but he added, as the announcement of at once a new doctrine, and the chief ground of their defence, 'The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.' Here was no obscure intimation that the economy with which the seventh day Sabbath stood connected was already superseded,—that, at all events, the pillars of that Sabbath had been overthrown, and the basis, or authority, on which they rested, merged in the supreme control of the founder of a new economy. He who had already appeared as 'Lord of all,' and had begun to 'make all things new,' was 'Lord also of the Sabbath;' and he could authorise an innovation on the sacredness of the seventh day, in traversing the corn-fields, just as truly as on the sacredness of the water of purification at the marriage-feast in Cana. The Sabbath of the seventh day, the ceremony of ablution, and the presenting of sin-offerings at Jerusalem, were all identified with a dispensation which stood abolished in the eye of God the moment 'the Son of man' appeared.

Christ commanded a leper whom he had healed, to 'go and offer for his cleansing according to the law.' But 'according to the law,' no leper *could* be purified, till he was sprinkled seven times with water and atoning blood. Our Lord did that by a miracle, and through his own immediate authority, which the law pronounced impossible without the use and sanction of ceremonial rites. His very healing of the leper was tantamount to a declaration that he had abolished the Mosaic law, or, what was of equal import, that he personally disregarded it. He ordered the individual, therefore, to offer 'for a testimony unto them,'—to appear before the priests 'according to the law,' that they might see his healed condition to be a proof of the law's abolition,—an evidence that its observances were now proved to be unnecessary and superseded.

All the instances of Christ's apparent deference to the Mosaic ritual were similar. They either, like the present, evinced actual inattention to the provisions of the law; or, like the observance of the passover, they exhibited him carefully supplanting a rite of the Old Testament, by a more simple one of the New; or, at the farthest, they showed him exposing the innovations of the rabbies, and rebuking the sacrilege of the people, in corrupting the typical exhibitions of divine truth, defacing the emblems which the Most High had set up of the great future work of expiation, and, in consequence, 'making the word of God of none effect.' His grand aim, in all his allusions to the law of Moses, was to show that its designs were fulfilled in his own ministry. His most terrible retort upon his opponents was, 'If you believed in Moses, ye would believe in me.' He constantly inculcated that, bad they understood the observances for which they were so zealous, they would have placed their faith, and hope, and trust, directly and spiritually upon himself. His apostles, after his ascension, followed in the same course. They encountered the same description of opponents—the same fondness for a continued observance of Mosaic rites—the same anxiety to advocate the permanent obligation of the typical law; and they confronted all with the same arguments—treated all in the same method—and possibly in as many instances, showed an apparent, personal, approved deference to the customs which they combated. Just as truly, then, during the ministry of Christ, as during that of his apostles, the Mosaic dispensation was past and abolished.—ED.]

## THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

QUESTION XXXVI. *Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace?*

ANSWER. The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and Man in two entire distinct natures, and one Person for ever.

QUESTION XXXVII. *How did Christ, being God, become Man?*

ANSWER. Christ, the Son of God, became Man by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

NEXT to the covenant of grace, and its various administrations, we have, in some following Answers, an account of the Mediator of the covenant. He is set forth in the glory of his Person, in the offices which he executes; and in the estate in which he either was or is, together with those accessions of glory with which he

shall perform the last part of his work in the close of time. The first thing to be considered is the constitution of his person, as God-man, Mediator.

*Christ the only Mediator.*

He is set forth as the only Mediator of the covenant of grace. How we are to understand his being Mediator, has been already considered. It was observed, that he did not make peace, by entreating that God would remit the debt, without giving that satisfaction which was necessary to be made for securing the glory of the divine justice. In this statement we militate against the Socinians, who suppose him to be styled a Mediator, only because he made known to the world those new laws contained in the gospel, which we are obliged to obey as a condition of God's being reconciled to us; and gave us a pattern of obedience in his conduct; and confirmed his doctrine by his death; and then interceded with God, that on these terms he would accept us, without any regard to the glory of his justice, which he is no farther concerned about, than by prevailing that it would desist from the demands which it might have made, and so pardon sin without satisfaction. But this opinion is directly contrary to the whole tenor of scripture. According to what is there taught, 'he gave his life a ransom for many;'<sup>u</sup> 'he made peace through the blood of his cross;'<sup>x</sup> and 'God brought him again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' as 'the God of peace,'<sup>y</sup> and, at the same time, appeared to be a God of infinite holiness and justice, and Christ a Mediator of satisfaction. This will be farther considered, however, when we speak concerning his priestly office.<sup>z</sup>

What we shall at present observe is, that he is styled the *only* Mediator. It is said, 'There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'<sup>a</sup> On this subject we oppose the Papists, who greatly derogate from the glory of Christ, by pretending that the angels and glorified saints are mediators of intercession, and that they not only offer up supplications to God in the behalf of men on earth, but with them present their own merits; as though Christ's redemption and intercession had not been sufficient without them. Accordingly, a great part of the Papists' worship consists in desiring that these good offices may be performed by them on their behalf. This I cannot but conclude to be a breach of the first, or, at least, let them put never so fair colours upon it, of the second commandment. We shall farther consider it in that light in its proper place.

The scriptures they bring in defence of this practice are nothing to their purpose. For whenever an angel is said to intercede for men, as when it is said, 'The angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah?'<sup>b</sup> or to be the object of their prayers or supplications, as Jacob says, 'The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads,'<sup>c</sup> no other person is intended but Christ, 'the Angel of the covenant.' Another scripture which they bring to the same purpose, is that in which Moses says, 'Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants.'<sup>d</sup> This they miserably pervert; for Moses desires, not that God would hear the prayers which these saints made to him in behalf of his church, but that he would remember the covenant which he made with them, and accomplish its promises, by bestowing the blessings which his people then stood in need of.

There are two other scriptures which are often cited by the Papists to this purpose, which, they think, can hardly be understood in any other sense. One is in Rev. v. 8, where it is said that 'the four beasts, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.' The other is in chap. viii. 3, 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.' It must be allowed, that there are many passages in this book which are hard to be understood. But there are none

u Matt. xx, 28.

a 1 Tim. ii. 5.

x Col. i. 20.

b Zech. i. 12.

y Heb. xiii. 20.

c Gen. xlviii. 16.

z See Quest. xlv.

d Exod. xxxii. 13.



contrary to the analogy of faith, or derogatory to the glory of Christ, as the sense the Papists give of these scriptures is. We must inquire, therefore, whether they may not be understood otherwise by us. It is said, indeed, 'the four beasts, and four and twenty elders, had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints;' but it is not fully determined whether, by these 'beasts and elders,' are intended the inhabitants of heaven, or men on earth. If the description is only an emblematical representation of those prayers which are directed to God from the church in this world, it is nothing to their purpose. But though we suppose that, by the beasts and elders who fell down before the Lamb, are meant the inhabitants of heaven, we are still not to understand that they are represented as praying for the saints on earth; for 'the golden vials full of odours,' are only an emblem of the prayers which are put up by the saints on earth, which God accepts of, or smells a sweet savour in, as perfumed with the odours of Christ's righteousness. This may be illustrated by those political emblems which are used in public solemnities; such as the coronation of kings, in which the regalia are carried by the prime ministers of state, not to signify that they have any branch of kingly dignity belonging to them, but to denote the honours and prerogatives of him who is the principal subject of the whole ceremony. So when the heavenly inhabitants are represented as having 'golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints,' the representation signifies only, that the prayers which are put up by God's people on earth, through the mediation of Christ, are graciously heard and answered by him. As to the other scripture in which it is said, 'Another angel stood at the altar, and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints,' it is generally understood, by those who do not adopt the absurd opinion of the Papists, as spoken of our Saviour; and then it makes nothing to their purpose, but rather militates against it. If it be objected to this sense of the text, that our Saviour cannot properly be called 'another angel,' and that the phrase must mean one of the created angels, the sense just given of the other scripture may be accommodated to it, and then the meaning is, this angel, or one of the angels, 'stood at the altar before the Lamb,' and, in an emblematical way, is set forth as having incense put into his hand, which he presents to him, not as offering it up himself, but as signifying that it was for the sake of Christ's merits that the prayers of his people on earth ascended with acceptance in the sight of God. It is as though he should say to Christ, "The incense is thine; thou hast a right to the glory of it; and therefore let all know, that this is the only foundation of the church's hope, that their wants shall be supplied by thee." So that this does not give the least countenance to the Popish doctrine of there being other mediators between God and man besides our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of the Papists, indeed, are sensible that this opinion tends to detract from the glory of our great Mediator; and they therefore choose rather to assert that the saints and angels are mediators between Christ and men, so that we are through their means to have access to him, and by him to the Father. But as Christ not only condescended to take our nature upon him, and therein to procure redemption for us, but invited his people to 'come to him;' as it is 'through him we have an access unto the Father;'<sup>e</sup> and as no mention is made of any by whom we have access to Christ, and our access to God is founded only in his blood; we have nothing else to do, but, by faith in what he has done and suffered, to draw nigh to God, as to a Father reconciled by this great and only Mediator.

#### *Christ as Mediator is God.*

This Mediator is described, as to his Person, as God incarnate, or, as it is expressed, 'the eternal Son of God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, who became Man, and that, in the most proper sense, by assuming to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul,' which are the two constituent parts of man. Here we are to consider the Person assuming the human nature, and the nature assumed or united to the divine Person.

The Person assuming the human nature is styled 'the eternal Son of God, of one substance with the Father,' and, with respect to his personality, 'equal with him.'<sup>f</sup> This is the same mode of speaking which was used by the Nicene Fathers, in defence of our Saviour's divinity against the Arians. Having largely insisted on this in our defence of the 'doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity,'<sup>g</sup> and having also explained what we mean by Christ's Sonship, as referring to his person and character as Mediator, we shall add no more on the subject at present, but take it for granted, that our Saviour is, in the most proper sense, a divine Person, and shall consider him as assuming the human nature.

1. We observe, then, that it was the second Person in the Godhead who was incarnate, and not the Father or the Holy Ghost. This we affirm against the Sabellians, who deny the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and assert, that the Father, or the Holy Ghost, might as truly be said to have been incarnate as the Son; their personality, according to them, being not so distinct, that what is done by one divine Person might not be said to have been done by another.<sup>h</sup>

2. It follows that the divine nature which belongs in common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, cannot be properly said to have been incarnate. It is true, we read, that 'God was manifest in the flesh;'<sup>i</sup> and elsewhere, that 'in him,' namely in the human nature, 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead;'<sup>k</sup> whence some take occasion to conclude, that the human nature was united to the Godhead, or that the Godhead of Christ was said to be incarnate. But, if this be asserted, it must be with caution and a distinction. I cannot suppose, therefore, that the Godhead absolutely considered, was incarnate; but that it was so as including the idea of its subsisting in the Person of the Son. This is very well expressed, when we say that the human nature was united to the second Person in the Godhead, rather than to the Godhead itself.

3. Christ being farther considered as the eternal Son of God, it follows that he existed before his incarnation. This was largely insisted on, under a foregoing Answer, in defence of Christ's proper deity. In this we oppose not only the Socinians, who deny that he existed before he was conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin; but also the Arians, especially those of them who take occasion to explain, without disguise, or ambiguity of words, what they mean when they speak of him as being before time, which comes infinitely short of what is intended by his being styled God's eternal Son, and so existing with him before time. Thus we have an account of the Person assuming the human nature

### *Christ as Mediator is Man.*

We are now to consider the nature assumed, or united to the divine Person. This was a human nature, consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul. Hence, as Christ is, in one nature, God equal with the Father; so, in the other, he is Man, made, in all the essential properties of the human nature, like unto us.

Here we may consider that as this is a matter of pure revelation, we have sufficient ground from scripture to assert, that our Saviour is both God and man. Many of the scriptures which were formerly referred to, to prove his deity, expressly attribute to him a human, as well as a divine nature, and speak of the same Person as both God and Man. God styles him, 'The man that is my Fellow.'<sup>l</sup> He who is 'Jehovah, our righteousness,' is also described as 'a branch, raised unto David,'<sup>m</sup> that is, of the seed of David; or, as the apostle says, he who 'is over all, God blessed for ever, was of the fathers concerning the flesh,' or his human nature.<sup>n</sup> Moreover, the same Person is styled 'The mighty God,' and yet 'a child born unto us, a Son given.'<sup>o</sup> He is called 'Immanuel, God with us,' and yet 'born of a Virgin.'<sup>p</sup> 'The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' 'He is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord,' and yet 'was made of the seed of David, according to

<sup>f</sup> See Sect. 'The Personality of the Son,' under Quest. ix, x, xi.

<sup>g</sup> See Quest. ix, x, xi.

<sup>h</sup> For this reason, the Sabellians are often called by ancient writers, 'Patripassians.'

<sup>i</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>k</sup> Col. ii. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Zech. xiii. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. ix. 5.

<sup>o</sup> Isa. ix. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. vii. 14. compared with Matt. i. 23.



the flesh.<sup>q</sup> He is 'God manifest in the flesh.'<sup>r</sup> These and many other scriptures as plainly prove him to be Man, as they do that he is God.<sup>s</sup> Indeed, the arguments taken from them to prove his humanity, are not so much contested as those which respect his proper deity. Hence, if these scriptures prove him to be God, they contain as strong and conclusive arguments to prove him to be Man; so that the mere mention of them is sufficient, especially when we consider, as it cannot be denied, that they all speak of the same Person.

When Christ is said to be both God and Man, the statement does not imply that there are two Persons in the Mediator. Accordingly it is said, in the Answer we are explaining, that though these natures are distinct, yet the Person who has them is but one. This is to be maintained against those who entertain favourable thoughts of the ancient heresy first broached by Nestorius,<sup>t</sup> whose method of reasoning cannot be reconciled with the sense of those scriptures which plainly speak of the same Person as both God and Man, and attribute the same actions to him in different respects. These things are inconsistent with the notion that the Mediator is both a divine and a human Person. Nor can it be denied that it is a contradiction in terms, to say that two Persons can be so united, as to become one. It must be acknowledged, however, that this is one of the incomprehensible mysteries of our religion; and, when divines have attempted to explain some things relating to it, they have only given farther conviction, that there are some doctrines contained in scripture which we are bound to believe, while we are at a loss to determine how they are what they are asserted to be.

It may be objected, that we cannot conceive of a human nature, such as our Saviour's is, which has not its own personality; since there is no parallel instance in any other men. This objection I take to be the principal thing which gave occasion to asserting, that he had a human Person, as well as a divine. The answer which I would give is, that though it is true that every man has a distinct subsistence of his own, without being united to any other person, yet we have no ground to conclude, that the human nature of Christ, even in its first formation, had any subsistence separate from the divine nature. Had it been first formed, and then united to the divine nature, it would have had a proper subsistence of its own; but since it was not, its personality, considered as united to the second Person in the Godhead, is contained therein, though its properties are infinitely distinct from it.

### *The Distinctness of Christ's two Natures.*

These two natures of Christ are distinct; united, but not confounded. This is asserted, in opposition to an old exploded heresy, which was maintained by some who, to avoid the error of Nestorius and his followers, went into the other extreme.<sup>u</sup> They asserted that the divine and human nature of Christ were confounded or blended together, after the similitude of things which are mixed together in a natural or artificial way, whereby the composition is of a different nature from the parts of which it is compounded. They, in consequence, debase his Godhead, and advance his manhood; or rather, instead of supposing him to be both God and Man, they, in effect, say that he is neither God nor Man. The main foundation, as I apprehend, of this absurd and blasphemous notion, was that they could not conceive how he could have a divine and human understanding and will, without asserting, with Nestorius, that there were two Persons in the Mediator; whereby

<sup>q</sup> Rom. i. 3.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>s</sup> See the same scriptures, and others to the like purpose, before cited, for the proof of Christ's proper deity, under Quest. ix, x, xi. and also what has been said concerning his Sonship, as implying him to be God-man Mediator.

<sup>t</sup> Nestorius was Bishop of Constantinople, in the reign of Theodosius the younger, A. D. 428, who very warmly maintained that the Virgin Mary was not the mother of that Person that was God, but of a distinct human Person, called Christ, which was censured and condemned by the council at Ephesus, A. D. 431.

<sup>u</sup> These are called Eutychians, from Eutyches, an abbot of Constantinople, who, when he had gained a great deal of reputation, in disputing against Nestorius in the council at Ephesus, a few years after, viz. A. D. 448, propagated his opinion, which was condemned as heretical in the council at Chalcedon, A. D. 451.

they split against one rock, while endeavouring to avoid another. To guard against both extremes, the Fathers, in the council of Chalcedon, explained the doctrine in words to this purpose: 'That the two natures of Christ were indivisibly and inseparably united, without supposing that one was changed into the other, or confounded with it.'

We must consider, then, that though the two natures are united, yet each of them retains its respective properties, as much as the soul and body of man do, though united together. This is the best similitude by which the subject can be illustrated; though I do not suppose that, in all respects, it corresponds. Thus, in one nature, Christ had all the fulness of the Godhead, and nothing common with us, nothing finite, derived, or dependent, or in any other way defective. In his other nature, he was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. In this nature, he was born in time, and did not exist from eternity, and increased in knowledge and other endowments proper to manhood. In one nature, he had a comprehensive knowledge of all things; in the other, he knew nothing but by communication, or derivation, and with those other limitations to which finite wisdom is subject. In one nature, he had an infinite sovereign will; in the other, he had such a will as the creature has. Though this was not opposite to his divine will, yet its conformity to it was of the same kind with that which is in perfect creatures. Hence, though we do not say that his human will was the same as his divine, as to the essential properties of it; yet it may be said to be the same, in a moral sense, as conformed to it, in such a manner as the will of man is said to be subjected to the will of God. Had this been duly considered, persons would not have been so ready to adopt an error, so dangerous and blasphemous as that which we are opposing. And we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to distinguish between his divine and human understanding and will. It is said, in one place, speaking of his divine understanding, 'Lord, thou knowest all things;'<sup>x</sup> and of his human, 'Of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the Son.'<sup>y</sup> So of his will, it is sometimes represented as truly divine, in the same sense as the Father's, as when it is said, 'As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;'<sup>z</sup> and elsewhere, 'If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us;'<sup>a</sup> and, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'<sup>b</sup> And in other places, he is represented as having a human will, essentially distinct from the will of God; as when he says, 'Not my will, but thine, be done.'<sup>c</sup>

### *The Reality of Christ's Human Nature.*

The nature which was assumed by the Son of God, is farther described as truly and properly human. It was not an angelic nature. The apostle says, 'He took not on him the nature of angels,' inasmuch as he did not design to redeem the angels that fell; but 'he took on him' the nature of 'the seed of Abraham.'<sup>d</sup> This nature is farther described, as consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul.

1. Christ is described as having a true body. This is maintained against those who, in an early age of the church,<sup>e</sup> denied that he had a real human nature. These, it is true, do not deny his deity; but they suppose that it was impossible for God to be united to human flesh, and therefore that he appeared only in the likeness of it. Just as some heathen writers represent their gods as appearing in human forms, that they might converse with men; so they suppose, that the Godhead of Christ appeared in a human form, without a real human nature. In this sense they understand that scripture, 'He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;'<sup>f</sup> as though, in that place, the similitude of a man were opposed to real humanity. Or, at least, they suppose, that he had no other human nature when he dwelt on earth, than what he had when he appeared to the church under the Old Testament dispensation, namely, to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and several others. They suppose that there was in this only the like-

<sup>x</sup> John xxi. 17.

<sup>b</sup> John vi. 37.

<sup>y</sup> Mark xiii. 32.

<sup>c</sup> Luke xxii. 42.

<sup>z</sup> John v. 21.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. ii. 16.

<sup>a</sup> 1 John v. 14.

<sup>e</sup> This absurd opinion, subversive of Christianity, was propagated by several among the Gnostics, in the second century, who, for this reason, were called Docetæ.

<sup>f</sup> Philip. ii. 7.



ness of a human body, or an aerial one ; which, according to some common modes of speaking, is called a Spirit. To gain countenance to their opinion, they bring some other scriptures ; as when it is said, after his resurrection, that 'he appeared in another form unto two disciples, as they walked and went into the country.'<sup>g</sup> So, when he appeared to Mary, it was in such a form that she 'knew not that it was Jesus,' but 'supposed him to be the gardener.'<sup>h</sup> Especially when it is said, in another scripture,<sup>i</sup> that when his two disciples at Emmaus knew him, 'he vanished out of their sight,'<sup>k</sup> they understand this of his vanishing in the same sense as, according to the popular way of speaking, a *spectrum* is said to do.

But this opinion is so absurd, as well as contrary to scripture, that it only shows how far the wild and extravagant fancies of men may run, who are so hardy as to set aside plain scriptures, and take up with some few passages, without considering their scope and design, or their harmony with other scriptures. Indeed, there is scarcely any thing said concerning him in the New Testament but what confutes it. There we have an account of him, as being born, passing through all the ages of life, conversing familiarly with his people, eating and drinking with them, and, at last, dying on the cross. These things put this matter out of all manner of dispute. He also distinguishes himself from a spirit ; for when the disciples were terrified at his standing unexpectedly in the midst of them, supposing that he had been a spirit, he satisfied them that they were mistaken, by saying, 'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.'<sup>l</sup>

As to those scriptures in the Old Testament which speak of his appearing in a human form, assumed for that purpose, whether there was, in every one of these instances, a real human body that appeared, though, in some of them, it is beyond dispute that there was, I will not pretend to determine.<sup>m</sup> Yet it must be considered that his appearing in this way is never styled his incarnation, or becoming man ; but was only an emblem or prelibation of it. Moreover, when it is said, in the scripture formerly quoted, that he was made 'in the likeness of men,' it does not follow that he was not, after his incarnation, a real man ; for the likeness of man is often so understood in scripture, as when it is said, on occasion of the birth of Seth, that 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness.'<sup>n</sup> As to that other scripture in which Christ is said to have appeared in different forms, it is not to be supposed that there was a change in his human nature, but only a change in his countenance or external mien ; or he appeared with other kind of garments, which rendered him not immediately known by them. And when, in the other scripture, it is said, 'he vanished out of their sight,' nothing is intended but an instantaneous withdrawing of himself ; which, it may be, might contain something miraculous.

2. Christ is farther described as having taken to himself a reasonable soul, to which his body was united. This is maintained against the Arians, who deny that he had a human soul, concluding that the divine nature, such an one as they will allow him to have, was, as it were, a soul to his body. This opinion is founded partly on their misunderstanding the sense of those scriptures in which it is said, 'The Word was made flesh ;'<sup>o</sup> 'God was manifest in the flesh ;'<sup>p</sup> 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ;'<sup>q</sup> and, 'Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came,'<sup>r</sup> &c. But the principal argument by which this opinion is supported is, that, as they suppose, if he had had a human soul, distinct from his divine nature, he must have had two understandings and wills, namely, a divine and a human ; and then it would have been possible for him to have had contrary ideas in his mind, and determinations in his will, as man, to what he had as God,—which would infer a sort of confusion of thought, and irregularity of actions.

Now, as to the former argument relating to his assuming flesh, it is a very

g Mark xvi. 12. h John xx. 14, 15. i Luke xxiv. 31. k *αφανής γινετο*. l Luke xxiv. 39.

m [Dr. Ridgeley here advances, but without proof, what seems to me a very untenable position,—that our Lord, in some of his appearances under the Old Testament dispensation, assumed 'a real human body.' For some remarks on it, see Note '*Melchizedek was not Christ*,' under Quest. xlv. —Ed.]

n Gen. v. 3.

o John i. 14.

p 1 Tim. iii. 16.

q Heb. ii. 14.

r Rom. ix. 5.

common thing in scripture, by a synecdoche, of the part for the whole, for 'flesh' to signify the whole man, consisting of soul and body. Of this we have many instances in scripture. It is said, for example, 'All flesh had corrupted his way,'<sup>s</sup> that is, all men had corrupted their way; and the prophet speaking concerning the vanity of man, as mortal, says, 'All flesh is grass.'<sup>t</sup>—As to the other branch of their argument, we allow that Christ, as Man, had a distinct understanding and will from what he had as God, and that his human understanding was not equally perfect with his divine, neither had his human will the sovereignty and glory of his divine will. Should it be allowed, also, that if his human understanding and will had not always been under the influence and direction of his divine, he might have had contrary ideas and determinations, as man, to what he had as God; yet we cannot allow that the divine nature would so far suspend its direction and influence, that his human understanding should have contradictory ideas to his divine; so that the inconvenience should ensue of occasioning a confusion and disorder in his actions, or methods of human conduct. It was no disparagement to him, nor hinderance to his work, to suppose that his human soul was subject to some natural imperfections, which were inconsistent with the infinite perfection of his deity. It is sufficient, however, to assert that, as Man, he knew every thing which he was obliged to perform in a way of obedience, and consented to and delighted in every thing which was agreeable to his divine will. For this would render his obedience complete, even though we suppose that the nature in which he performed it was less perfect than that to which it was united. The Arian method of reasoning, therefore, is not conclusive; and we must suppose that he had a human soul distinct from his divine nature. This is evident, because he could not perform obedience in the divine nature, his human soul being the only subject of obedience, and it is proper to the deity to be dispassionate. Hence, those sinless passions to which he was subject were seated in his soul, as united to the body. That he had such passions, is very plain from scripture; for he says, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.'<sup>u</sup> And there are various other passions besides sorrow which he was subject to, which, though free from sin, were altogether inconsistent with the infinite perfection of the divine nature.

### *The Incarnation of Christ.*

This human nature is said to have been conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

1. There was something in the formation of Christ's human nature in which he resembled the rest of mankind. He was not produced and brought into a state of manhood in an instant, or created out of the dust of the ground as Adam was, but was born, or as the apostle expresses it, 'made of a woman,'<sup>x</sup> to denote his being formed out of her substance. Accordingly, he began his state of humiliation in infancy, that he might, in all respects, be made like unto those whom he came to redeem. Herein not only the promise made to our first parents, relating to his being the seed of the woman,<sup>y</sup> was fulfilled; but another express prediction by the prophet Isaiah, who says, 'Unto us a child is born.'<sup>z</sup>

2. There was something peculiar and extraordinary in his formation, as he was an extraordinary Person, and to be engaged in a work peculiar to himself. He is said to have been born of a virgin, not because, as some suppose, that that is a state of greater sanctity than any other condition of life, but, as was formerly observed,<sup>a</sup> that he might be exempted from the guilt of Adam's first sin, which he would have been liable to, though sanctified from the womb, had his human nature been formed in an ordinary way. It was certainly necessary that his human nature, which was, in its formation, united to his divine Person, should be perfectly sinless; for it would have been a reproach cast on the Son of God, to have it said concerning him, that he was, in the nature which he assumed, estranged to and separate from God, as all mankind are who are born in an ordinary way. This was neces-

<sup>s</sup> Gen. vi. 12.

<sup>z</sup> Isa. ix. 6.

<sup>t</sup> Isa. xl. 6.

<sup>u</sup> Matt. xxvi. 38.

<sup>x</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

<sup>y</sup> Gen. iii. 15

<sup>a</sup> See Sect. 'Christ not represented by Adam,' under Quest. xxii.



sary, also, 'or his accomplishing the work of our redemption; for, as the apostle says, 'Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.'<sup>b</sup> Moreover, in order to his being born of a virgin, there was an extraordinary display of the power of God. Accordingly it is said, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.'<sup>c</sup>

His being born of a virgin, was an accomplishment of the prediction, 'The Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bare a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.'<sup>d</sup> This text being so convincing a proof of Christianity, and, as such, referred to in the New Testament,<sup>e</sup> the Jews and many of the modern Deists have endeavoured to weaken the force of it. We require, therefore, to illustrate and explain it, agreeably to the scope and design of the prophecy, contained in the context, which we shall endeavour to do, in the following paraphrase. Says God to the prophet, "Go to Ahaz, and bid him not be faint-hearted, by reason of the threatened invasion by the confederate kings of Israel and of Syria; but let him ask a sign for the confirmation of his faith, that I may thereby assure him that they shall not be able to do him any hurt. But I know, beforehand, his unbelief, and the sullenness of his temper, that he will refuse to ask a sign. Therefore, when thou goest to meet him, take thy young son, Shear-jashub, in thine hand, or in thine arms, from whom thou mayest take occasion to deliver part of the message which I send thee with to him. Tell him, that though he refuse to ask a sign, 'nevertheless,<sup>f</sup> the Lord himself shall give a sign,' to his people, whom thou shalt command to hear this message, as well as Ahaz, they being equally concerned in it. Let them know, that, though their obstinate and wicked king calls a compliance with my command a tempting of me, and therefore will not ask a sign, I will not give him any other sign than what the whole house of Israel shall behold, in future ages; which, though it cannot be properly called a prognostic sign, yet, when it comes to pass, will be a rememorative sign.<sup>g</sup> And it shall be a glorious one; for, 'behold, a virgin<sup>h</sup> shall conceive, and bear a Son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel.' When this wonderful thing shall happen a thing new and unheard of shall be 'created in the earth,' as is said elsewhere,<sup>i</sup> 'that a woman should compass a man.' Then the house of David shall understand the reason why I have not suffered these two kings to destroy Judah, so that it should be 'broken, that it be not a people,' as Ephraim shall 'within threescore and five years;<sup>k</sup> for then the Messiah could not come of the house of David. And what he shall do for them, when he comes, is the ground and reason of all the temporal deliverances which I work for them, and particularly of this from the intended invasion of the two confederate kings. Tell them, moreover, that as this shall be a

<sup>b</sup> Heb. vii. 26.

<sup>c</sup> Luke i. 35.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. vii. 14.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. i. 22, 23.

<sup>f</sup> So the Hebrew word ought to be rendered, rather than 'therefore;' for so it is understood in other scriptures, particularly in Jer. xxx. 16.

<sup>g</sup> This is a just distinction relating to signs mentioned in scripture; in which sometimes a sign was not given till the thing signified, or brought to remembrance thereby, had been accomplished. See Exod. iii. 12; 1 Sam. ii. 34; Isa. xxxvii. 30; Jer. xlv. 29, 30; as Bishop Kidder well observes. See Demonstrat. of the Messias. Part II. page 105, in Fol.

<sup>h</sup> The Hebrew word עַלְמָה is truly rendered 'a virgin.' It is so translated by the LXX, [*παρθένα*], who well understood the sense of it in this and other places where we meet with it. The Chaldee Paraphrast also thus understands it, and the Syriac, Arabic, and vulgar Latin versions. And this sense agrees with the grammatical construction of the word, which is derived from עָלַם, abscondit. It alludes to the custom used among the Jews of keeping their virgins concealed until they were married. Hence, as a learned writer well observes, 'עַלְמָה' Notat statum solitium domi delitescens ideoque, celebium et virginum.' As to those two places in which it is generally objected by the Jews that the word does not signify 'a virgin,' but 'a young woman,' namely, Prov. xxx. 19, and Cant. vi. 8; in the former, as one observes, 'Promptissimum est intelligere vincula amoris quibus virgo incipit adstringi futuro sponso suo;' and therefore it may be understood of a virgin, in the literal sense of the word. Vid. Corc. Lexic. in Voc. The LXX, indeed, render it ἀνδρὸς ἐν νεότητι, and the vulgar Latin version, Viri in adolescentia; but the Chaldee Paraphrast renders it, Viri in virgine. As to the latter scripture, in which it is said, 'there are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number,' it is plain that the word 'virgins' is not opposed to 'young women;' for such were many of them that are called 'queens and concubines,' but to persons deflowered. We may conclude, therefore, that the word always signifies a virgin, and therefore is rightly translated in the text under our present consideration.

<sup>i</sup> Jer. xxxi. 22.

<sup>k</sup> Isa. vii. 8.

rememorative sign, so I will give them\* to understand, at present, that they shall be delivered in a little time. For 'before this child,' which thou hast here brought with thee, 'shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good,' or shall know the difference between moral good and evil, that is, in two or three years' time, 'the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings;' or those two kings whom thou darest, shall be driven, by the king of Assyria, out of their own land. And inasmuch as my people may be afraid, that before these two years expire they shall be brought into such straits, through famine or scarcity of provisions, as generally attend sieges, so that they shall want the necessities of life; let them know that this child, meaning Shear-jashub, shall not want 'butter and honey,' that is, the best and most proper food for it, 'that he may know,' or rather *until*<sup>1</sup> 'he know to refuse the evil and choose the good,' that is, till these two kings, Rezin and Pekah, be utterly destroyed."

3. Having thus considered our Saviour's being born of a virgin, there is one thing more to be observed under this Head, namely, that he was of her substance. This is particularly mentioned in the Answer, with a design to guard against an ancient heresy, maintained by the Gnostics in the second century, and defended by others in later ages. These supposed that our Saviour did not derive his human nature from the Virgin Mary; but that it was formed in heaven, and sent down from thence, and that the Virgin's womb is to be considered only as the first seat of its residence in this lower world. This opinion they found on those scriptures which speak of his 'coming down from heaven;'<sup>m</sup> which they understand concerning his human nature. Yet nothing is intended by them but the manifestative presence of his divine nature; in which respect God is, in other scriptures, said to 'come down' into this lower world.<sup>n</sup> Another scripture, which they bring to the same purpose, is that in which, as they suppose, he denies his relation to his mother, when he says, 'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'<sup>o</sup> Here he does not deny his natural relation to them, but designs to show that his regard to persons in the exercise of his public ministry, was principally founded on their doing the will of his Father. The errorists in question farther suppose, that if his human nature had, in any respect, been derived from the substance of the Virgin, either she must be concluded immaculate, as the Papists view her to be, or else he must have been born a sinner. This, however, has been already proved to be no just consequence; inasmuch as the formation of his human nature, though of the substance of the Virgin, was in an extraordinary and miraculous way, whereby he was exempted from the guilt of original sin.

There is another opinion maintained by some of the schoolmen, which, though it is not generally received, seems to me not altogether improbable. It is, that though Christ's human body was formed in the womb of the Virgin, and was a part of her substance, yet, as to the manner of its formation, it differed from that of all other human bodies; for while the matter of which they consist receives its form in a gradual way, so that they cannot, properly speaking, be styled human bodies till organized and fitted to have their souls united to them, the body of Christ, on the other hand, was, in its first formation, rendered fit to receive the soul, which was in an instant united to it, so that both soul and body, at the same time, without having any separate subsistence, were united to the divine nature. Though I think this account of the formation of Christ's human body most in harmony with the union of his soul and body with the divine nature in the very instant of its formation, and therefore cannot but conclude it a more probable conjecture than what is generally received; yet I do not lay it down as a necessary article of faith, nor would I be supposed to deny that the body of Christ grew in the womb like other human bodies after the soul is united to them, or to set aside the account the scripture gives of the Virgin's 'accomplishing the' full number of 'days, that she should be delivered.'<sup>p</sup> Thus have we considered our Saviour, as having a true body and a reasonable soul, and both united to the divine nature, whereby he is, in this Answer, denominated God incarnate.

<sup>1</sup> So the word is properly rendered by the Chaldee Paraphrast.\*

<sup>m</sup> John iii. 13, 31.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. xi. 5, 7.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xii. 48, 50.

<sup>p</sup> Luke ii. 6.



*The Date and Duration of Christ's Incarnate State.*

Our Mediator is farther said to have been 'incarnate, in the fulness of time;' and it is added, 'he shall continue to be God and man for ever.'

1. Let us consider what is meant by Christ's becoming man in the fulness of time. The human nature could not be united to the divine from eternity; for it is inconsistent with its being a created nature, that it should exist from eternity. Yet he might, had it been so determined, have assumed this nature in the beginning of time, or immediately after the fall of man, who then stood in need of a mediator. But God, in his sovereign and wise providence, ordered it otherwise, and ordained that there should be a considerable distance of time between the fall of man, and Christ's incarnation in order to his recovery. The period fixed on, is called in scripture, 'the fulness of time,'<sup>a</sup> that is, the time foretold by the prophets, and particularly Daniel;<sup>r</sup> whose prediction had an additional circumstance of time annexed to it, which gave occasion to the Jews to expect Christ's coming at the actual time when he became incarnate.

That there was an universal expectation of the Messiah at this time, appears from the disposition of many among them to adhere to any one, especially if he pretended that he was a prophet, or that he would make some change in their civil affairs. The Jewish historian<sup>s</sup> tells us of many tumults and seditions which were in that age. Some of their ringleaders he styles magicians. And though he does not expressly say that persons pretending to be prophets assumed the character of Messiah; yet he observes, that the time in which they appeared occasioned their being viewed as such.<sup>t</sup> By this he means, that it being at that time that the Jews expected that the Messiah, their King, should come, they thought it a fit opportunity to make efforts to shake off the Roman yoke. And they were so far from concealing the expectation they had of this, that it was well known by the heathen, who were not without jealousies concerning them, with respect to this matter. Hence, some celebrated writers among the latter observe, that it was generally received throughout the East, according to some ancient predictions, that at that time the Jews should obtain the empire.<sup>u</sup> There are also several expressions, in scripture, which intimate as much. Thus Gamaliel speaks of one Theudas, 'who boasted himself to be somebody,' by which it is probable, he means the Messiah, 'to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, who was slain.'<sup>x</sup> This some think to be the same person whom Josephus mentions, the name being the same; though others are rather inclined to think that it was another pretender to this character, from some critical remarks they make on the circumstance of time referred to by Gamaliel being different from that which is mentioned by Josephus.<sup>y</sup> This, however, does not affect our argument; for it is plain, from this instance, that about that time the Jews were disposed to join themselves to any one who endeavoured to persuade them that he was the Messiah. This farther appears from the words of our Saviour, 'All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers;'<sup>z</sup> by which, doubtless, he means several who pretended to be the Messiah, in the age before he came. It is said elsewhere,<sup>a</sup> a little before our Saviour's crucifixion, that 'they,' that is, the Jews generally, 'thought that the kingdom of God,' and consequently the Messiah whom they expected, 'should immediately appear.' Our Lord also foretells, that between that period and the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, before that age was at an end, 'many false Christs should arise,' and warns his followers not to adhere to them.<sup>b</sup> Moreover, had not the Jews expected that the Messiah would appear at that time, they would never have sent in so formal a manner, as they are said to have done,

q Gal. iv. 4. r Dan. ix. 24, 25.

s See Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 1. et lib.

xx. cap. 2. et de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 6.

t Βασιλιαν ὁ καιρος ἀνιστῆθαι.

u Vid. Sueton. in Vespas. Percrebuerat oriente toto, vetus et consians opinio, esse in fati; ut eo tempore Judea profecti, rerum potirentur. And Tacit. Histor. lib. v. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judea rerum potirentur.

x Acts v. 36.

y See Lightfoot's works, vol. i. pages 765, 766.

z John x. 8.

a Luke xix. 11.

b Matt. xxiv. 24—26.

to inquire, whether John the Baptist, when he exercised his public ministry amongst them, was he.<sup>c</sup> And when he had convinced them that he was not the Messiah, but that our Saviour would soon appear publicly amongst them, who had the only right to this character, he found it no difficult matter to persuade them to believe it. Accordingly, 'Jerusalem, and all Judea,' that is, the people almost universally, attended on his ministry, and 'were baptized,' making a profession of their faith in the coming of the Messiah, and of their expectation of him, and willingness to adhere to him. And it was the report which 'the wise men who came from the east' had received from the Jews who were conversant with them, that this was the time that the Messiah should appear, which brought them to Jerusalem from their respective countries; for without this, the preternatural meteor or star which they saw, could not have given them a sufficient intimation concerning this matter, so as to induce them to come and pay their homage to him. And when they came, and inquired of Herod, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' how surprising soever it might be to that proud tyrant, to think that there was one born who, as he supposed, would stand in competition with him for the crown; yet it was no unexpected thing to the Sanhedrim, whose opinion in this matter he demanded, in an hypocritical manner. Hence, they said that he was to be born in Bethlehem, according to the prediction of the prophet Micah. But if they had not known that this was the time in which he was to be born, they would have replied, that it was an unseasonable question, and a vain thing, to ask where a person was to be born whose birth was not expected in that age. They might also have easily satisfied Herod, and removed the foundation of his jealousy and trouble, and thereby have prevented the inhuman barbarity committed on the infants of Bethlehem, if they had told him that the time spoken of by the prophet Daniel, in which the Messiah was to be born, was not yet come. But they knew otherwise; and in this respect, Christ might be said to be born 'in the fulness of time.'

We farther observe, that the coming of Christ was at that time when God had sufficiently tried the faith of the Old Testament church, in waiting for his coming, and thereby glorified his sovereignty, who hath the times and seasons of his bestowing all blessings in his own power.—Again, it was at that time when the measure of the iniquity of the world was abundantly filled, whereby his people might observe the deplorable state into which sin had brought mankind, and the utter impossibility of our recovery without a Mediator, and that the light of nature could not discover any method by which the redemption and salvation of man might be brought about.—Further, it was at that time when the Jewish church was at the lowest ebb. It was, therefore, the most seasonable time; and they were laid under the highest obligations to adore and magnify him. Their political state was broken, the sceptre had departed from Judah; and they were brought under the Roman yoke, which sat very uneasy upon them; nor could they ever expect to make that figure in the world which they once had done. Now, therefore, was the time for the Messiah to come, and erect his kingdom. Besides, they were given up to a very great degree of judicial blindness and hardness, and were disposed to make void the law of God by their traditions; so that religion among them was at a very low ebb. On this account, it was the fittest time for God to display his grace, in reviving his work, and preventing his cause and interest from wholly sinking in the world. This was the time in which the Son of God became Man.

2. Christ shall continue to be God and Man for ever. The union of these two natures is indissoluble. As to his divine nature, he is necessarily eternal and unchangeable; and the human nature shall continue for ever united to it, as the result of the divine purpose, in which God intends that some ends glorious to himself, honourable to the Mediator, and advantageous to his people, should be attained thereby.

If Christ had had a design to lay aside his human nature, he would have done so when he had finished in it his work of obedience and sufferings, and had thereby so far answered the end of his incarnation that nothing more was necessary for the



purchase of redemption. But when he rose from the dead, as a conqueror over death and hell, and was declared to have accomplished the work he came into the world to perform, it is certain he did not lay it aside, but ascended visibly into heaven, and shall come again, in a visible manner, in that same nature, to judge the world at the last day.

Again, the eternity of Christ's human nature appears from the eternity of his mediatorial kingdom. Of this more shall be said under a following Answer, when we come to speak concerning the glory of Christ's kingly office. It appears, also, from the eternity of his intercession, which, as the apostle states, 'he ever liveth to make'<sup>d</sup> for his people. This he does, by appearing in the human nature in the presence of God, in their behalf; so that he must for ever have a human nature.

Further, his saints shall abide for ever in heaven, and as the apostle says, 'shall ever be with the Lord.'<sup>e</sup> Their happiness shall continue, both as to soul and body. And, with respect to their bodies, it is said, they shall be 'fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.'<sup>f</sup> From these things it follows that his glorious body, or his human nature, shall continue for ever united to his divine Person.

Finally, his retaining his human nature for ever, seems necessary, as it redounds to the glory of God. It is an eternal monument of his love to mankind, and an eternal means to draw forth their love to him, who procured those mansions of glory, which they shall for ever be possessed of, by what he did and suffered for them in that nature.

## WHY THE MEDIATOR REQUIRED TO BE GOD AND MAN.

### QUESTION XXXVIII. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?*

ANSWER. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and so satisfy God's justice, procure his favour, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

### QUESTION XXXIX. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be Man?*

ANSWER. It was requisite the Mediator should be Man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer, and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

### QUESTION XL. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and Man in one Person?*

ANSWER. It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and Man, and this in one Person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole Person.

OUR Mediator having been considered as God and Man, in one Person, we have a farther account of the necessity of his being so.

### *Why the Mediator required to be God.*

It was necessary that he should be a divine Person, for several reasons here assigned, with others that may be added.

1. If he had not been God, he could not have come into the world, or been incarnate, and have had the guilt of our sins laid on him, with his own consent; for he could not have been a party in the everlasting covenant, in which this matter was stipulated between the Father and him. Had he not consented to be charged with the guilt of our sin, he could not have been punished for it; inasmuch as God cannot punish an innocent person. Moreover, if such an one be charged with this guilt, and consequently rendered the object of vindictive justice, as our Saviour is said to have been, in scripture, it must be with his own consent. Now the human nature could not consent to its own formation; and therefore it could not consent to

bear our iniquities. To consent, supposes the person to be existent, which Christ, had he been only Man, would not have been before his incarnation. Hence, on that supposition, he could not have come into the world as a Surety for us, and so would not have been fit, in this respect, to have discharged the principal part of the work which he engaged in as Mediator.

2. There is another thing, mentioned in this Answer, which rendered it requisite that the Mediator should be God, namely, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death. It must be allowed that the weight of the wrath of God, due to our sin, was so great that no mere creature could, by his own strength, have subsisted under it. We will not deny that a mere creature, supposing him only innocent, but not united to a divine Person, might have been borne up, under the greatest burden laid on him, by the extraordinary assistance of God, with whom all things are possible; or that God's giving a promise that he should not fail or be discouraged, is such a security as would effectually keep it from sinking. Yet, when we consider the human nature as united to the divine, we see an additional security that he should not sink under the infinite weight of the wrath of God, which lay upon him; for then it would have been said, that he who is a divine Person, miscarried in an important work which he undertook to perform in his human nature, which would have been a dishonour to him. So far this argument hath its proper force.

3. There is another reason, however, which more fully proves the necessity of the Mediator's being a divine Person, namely, that this might give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession, that so what he did might have a tendency to answer the valuable ends designed, namely, satisfying the justice of God, procuring his favour, and purchasing a peculiar people to himself. Had he been only man, what he did and suffered might, indeed, have been sinless, and perfect in its kind; yet it could not be of infinite value; for a finite creature, as such, cannot pay an infinite price, and thereby answer the demands of justice. Had nothing been demanded of him but a debt of obedience, which he was obliged to perform for himself as a creature, it would not, indeed, have been necessary that it should be of infinite worth and value, any more than that obedience which was due from our first parents, while in a state of innocency. But when it is considered as a price of redemption paid for us, and as designed to procure for us a right to the favour of God and eternal life, it must be of such a value, that the glory of the justice of God might be secured, which nothing less than an infinite price could do. Besides, the law of God must be not only fulfilled, but magnified and made honourable; and hence, the obedience which was required, must not only be sinless, but have in it an infinite worth and value, that hereby, when in a way of intercession it is pleaded before God, it might be effectual to answer the ends designed. But of this description the obedience of Christ could not have been, had he not been an infinite Person, namely, God as well as Man.

4. Another reason assigned is, that he might give his Spirit to his people. It is necessary that redemption should be applied as well as purchased; and that the same Person, as a peculiar branch of glory due to him, should perform the one and the other. It was necessary also that, in the application of redemption, the Spirit should be glorified, that hereby he might appear to be a divine Person. And, as he acts herein in subserviency to the Mediator's glory, as has been before observed,<sup>g</sup> he is said to be sent by him, which he could not have been, had not Christ had a divine nature, in which respect he was equal with him; nor could he be said to give that which the Spirit works, as he promised to do, when he told his disciples, 'If I depart, I will send him unto you.'<sup>h</sup>

5. It was necessary that Christ should be God, that he might conquer all our enemies, and so remove all things out of the way which tend to oppose his name, interest, and glory. These are sin, Satan, the world, and death. Sin, which is opposite to the holiness of God, is that which spirits, excites, and gives being to all the opposition which there is against him, either in earth or hell, and endea-

<sup>g</sup> See Sect. 'The Economy of the Persons in the Godhead,' under Quest. ix, x, xi.  
<sup>h</sup> John xvi. 7.



vours to eclipse his glory, control his sovereignty, and reflect dishonour on all his perfections. This must be subdued by Christ, so that 'it may no longer have dominion' over his people.<sup>i</sup> In order to this, its condemning power must be taken away, by his making satisfaction for it, as our great High Priest; and also its enslaving power subdued by the efficacy of his grace, in the internal work of sanctification. Upon his having obtained this victory over sin, Satan also is conquered when his prisoners are brought from under his power. He then finds himself for ever disappointed, and not able to detain those who were at first led captive by him, or to defeat the purpose of God relating to the salvation of his elect, or to boast as though he had wrested the sceptre out of his hand, or robbed him of one branch of his glory. Moreover, the world, which is reckoned among the number of God's enemies, must be conquered. It opposes his name and interest in an objective way; whence corrupt nature takes occasion either to abuse the various gifts and dispensations of providence, or, by contracting an intimacy with those who are enemies to God and religion, to become more like them. 'The friendship of the world,' says the apostle, 'is enmity with God.'<sup>k</sup> Now Christ must be God, that he may discover its snares, and enable his people to improve the good things of providence to his glory, and overrule the evil things of it for their good. As to death, which is reckoned among Christ's and his people's enemies, and which the apostle calls, 'the last enemy that is to be destroyed,'<sup>l</sup> it is suffered to detain the bodies of believers as its prisoners, till Christ's second coming. Yet it must be destroyed, that so they may be made partakers of complete redemption; and the destruction of it is a part of the Mediator's work, as he raises up his people at the last day. Now, as all these victories over sin, Satan, the world, and death, require infinite power, so it is necessary that he who obtains them should be a divine Person.

6. It is necessary that the Mediator should be God, that he might bring his people to everlasting salvation, that is, first fit them for heaven, lead them in the way to it, and then receive them to it at last. For this reason, he is styled, 'The Author and Finisher of our faith';<sup>m</sup> and it is said, that as 'he began the good work, so he performs it,'<sup>n</sup> or carries it on to perfection. Grace is Christ's gift and work, as he purchased it by his blood, while on earth; and it is necessary that he should apply it by his power. As Zerubbabel, who was a type of him, after he had laid the foundation-stone of the temple, at last 'brought forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it';<sup>o</sup> so Christ works all our works for us and in us, till he brings them to perfection, and 'presents his people unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.'<sup>p</sup> Now, this is certainly a divine work; and, consequently, he who performs it must be a divine Person.

7. It was necessary that our Mediator should be God, inasmuch as the everlasting happiness of his people consists in the enjoyment of him. He is not only the Author of their complete blessedness, but, as we may say, the matter of it. They are made happy, not only by him, but in him. Accordingly, heaven is described as a state in which they 'behold his glory,'<sup>q</sup> and 'see him as he is.'<sup>r</sup> Since, then, he is the Fountain of blessedness, it is requisite that he should be God as well as Man.

### *Why the Mediator required to be Man.*

It was requisite that the Mediator should be Man. When we speak of the necessity of Christ's incarnation, we are not to understand that it was absolutely necessary, without supposing the divine will or purpose to redeem man. For as our redemption was not in itself necessary, but was so only as the result of God's purpose relating to it, so Christ's incarnation was necessary as a means to accomplish it. This is what divines generally call a conditional necessity.<sup>s</sup> As Christ was ordained to be a Mediator between God and man, it was requisite that he should

i Rom. vi. 14.  
n Phil. i. 6.  
r 1 John iii. 2.

k James iv. 4.  
o Zech. iv. 7.  
s It is otherwise styled *Necessitas consequentiæ*.

l 1 Cor. xv. 26.  
p Eph. v. 27.

m Heb. xii. 2.  
q John xvii. 24.

become Man. The reason assigned is, that he might perform obedience to the law. That obedience to the law was required, in order to his making satisfaction for sin, we shall have occasion to consider, when we speak of his priestly office. All that need be observed under this Head is, that this obedience could not be performed by him in the divine nature ; for in that nature he cannot be under any obligation to perform that which belongs only to those who are creatures, and, as such, subjects. Hence, if he be made under the law, he must have a nature fitted and disposed to yield obedience.

Some have inquired, whether it was possible for Christ to have answered this end, by taking any other nature into union with his divine Person ; or, whether it might have been brought about by his taking on him the nature of angels. I shall not enter so far into this subject as to determine whether God might, had he pleased, have accepted of obedience in any other nature fitted for that purpose. But we have ground, from scripture, to conclude, that this was the only way which God had ordained for the redemption of man. Hence, though Christ might have performed obedience in some other finite nature, or might have taken the nature of angels, his doing so would not, in all respects, have answered those many great ends which were designed by his incarnation. And as this was the way in which God ordained that man should be redeemed, it was necessary that he should take the human nature into union with his divine. And inasmuch as he was to yield obedience to the same law which we had violated, it was necessary that he should, as the apostle expresses it, be ‘made of a woman.’<sup>t</sup> God had ordained, as an expedient most conducive to his own glory, that he who was to be our Redeemer should run the same race with us ; and also that he should suffer what was due to us, as the consequence of our rebellion against him, that so, as ‘the Captain of our salvation, he should be made perfect through sufferings.’<sup>u</sup> And inasmuch as sufferings were due to us in our bodies, it was necessary, God having so ordained it, that he should suffer in his body, as well as in his soul ; and as death entered into the world by sin, so God ordained that we should be redeemed from the power of the grave, by one who died for us. On these grounds, it was necessary that he should be man.

There are other ends mentioned in this Answer, which render it necessary that he should be man, namely, that he might advance our nature. It was a very great honour which that particular nature which he assumed was advanced to, that it was taken into union with his divine Person. Though it had no intrinsic dignity or glory, above what other intelligent, finite, sinless beings are capable of ; yet it had a greater relative glory than any other creature had, or can have. This may be illustrated by a similitude taken from the body of man. How mean soever the body is in itself ; yet its relation to the soul adds a degree of excellency to it, in a relative sense, greater than what belongs to any creature destitute of understanding. So the human nature of Christ, though it had not in itself a glory greater than what another finite creature might have been advanced to ; yet, when considered as united to the divine nature, its glory, in a relative sense, may be said to be infinite. Now, as Christ’s being truly and properly man, was a particular instance in him of the advancement of our nature to a greater degree of honour than what has been conferred on any other creature, this lays the highest obligation on us to admire and adore him, and should be an inducement to us not to debase, by the commission of those sins which are the greatest reproach unto it, that nature which God has, in this respect, delighted to honour.

Another consequence of Christ’s incarnation, whereby it farther appears that it was requisite that he should be man, is, that in our nature he might make intercession for us. For understanding this, let it be considered that the divine nature cannot, properly speaking, be said to make intercession ; since this includes worship, and argues the Person who intercedes, to be dependant and indigent, which is inconsistent with the self-sufficiency and independency of the Godhead. Hence, had Christ been merely God, he could not have made intercession for us ; and his making intercession is the necessary result of his incarnation.



It may be objected that as 'the Spirit' is said to 'make intercession for the saints according to the will of God,'<sup>x</sup> though he has no human nature to make intercession in; so Christ might have made intercession for us, though he had not been incarnate. But when the Spirit is said to make intercession for us, the statement is not to be understood of his appearing in the presence of God, and so offering prayers or supplications to him in our behalf. It means only his enabling us to pray for ourselves; which is an effect of his power, working this grace in us. Hence, the apostle, speaking concerning the same thing, says elsewhere, 'God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father,'<sup>y</sup> that is, enabling us to cry, 'Abba, Father.' Such an intercession as this is not unbecoming a divine Person; and this is what is plainly the sense of those scriptures in which the Spirit is said to intercede for us. As for Christ's intercession, it consists in his praying for us, rather than in enabling us to pray; so that it was requisite that he should be man, in order to perform it.

As another objection, it is generally supposed that Christ made intercession for his people before his incarnation. It is concluded, for example, that he is intended by 'the angel of the Lord,' who is represented as pleading for Israel, 'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and upon the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?'<sup>z</sup> and also as pleading in their behalf against the accusations of Satan, 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?'<sup>a</sup> Now, say the objectors, if he made intercession at that time, when he had no human nature, his incarnation was not necessary in order to his making it. But though we allow that Christ is often represented, in the Old Testament, as interceding for his people; yet the expressions which so represent him either are proleptical, and do not denote so much what Christ then did, as what he would do after he had assumed our nature; or they imply that the salvation of the church, under that dispensation, was owing to the intercession which Christ would make after his incarnation, as well as to that satisfaction which he would give to the justice of God in our nature. Hence, Christ, in those scriptures, is represented as procuring those blessings for his people, by what he would, in reality, do after his incarnation; the virtue of which is supposed to be extended to them at that time. He interceded for them, not *formally*, but *virtually*. His having done so, therefore, does not prove that his incarnation was not necessary for his making that intercession, which he ever lives to conduct in behalf of his church.

It is farther observed, that it was requisite that our Mediator should be Man, that he might have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities. The apostle says, 'He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' having been, 'in all points,' in his human nature, 'tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'<sup>b</sup> As God, it is true, he has a perfect, namely, a divine knowledge of our infirmities, but not an experimental knowledge of them. In this respect, therefore, had he not been Man, he could not have been said to sympathize with us in them. Hence, his compassion towards us has this additional motive taken from his incarnation. It was in this respect that he had the passions of the human nature, and is induced, from what he once experienced, to help our infirmities, as being such as he himself condescended to bear.

It may be added, as a farther consequence of his incarnation, that we are made partakers of the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access, with boldness, to the throne of grace. The apostle gives us occasion to infer, from his being made of a woman, and made under the law, not only that 'he might redeem them that were under the law,' but that 'we might receive the adoption of sons';<sup>c</sup> and he encourages us, from hence, to 'come boldly to the throne of grace.'<sup>d</sup> As Christ's sonship, as Mediator, includes his incarnation, and was the ground and reason of the throne of grace being erected, to which we are invited to come; so, he being, in the same respect, constituted Heir of all things, believers, who are the sons of God in a lower sense, are styled, 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'<sup>e</sup> He is the Head and

x Rom. viii. 27.  
b Heb. iv. 15.

y Gal. iv. 6.  
c Gal. iv. 5.

z Zech. i. 12.  
d Heb. iv. 16.

a Zech. iii. 2.  
e Rom. viii. 17.

Lord of this great family. He purchased an inheritance for them; and, as members of his family, they have a right to it in the virtue of his purchase. Hence, his incarnation, which was necessary in order to this, was the great foundation of our obtaining the privileges of God's adopted children, and of our access by him to the Father. We first come by faith to him who, if we may allude to Elihu's words, 'was formed out of the clay,' so that 'his terror shall not make us afraid, neither shall his hand be heavy upon us;'<sup>f</sup> and, through him, we come to God, as to our reconciled Father.

*Why the Mediator required to be God and Man in one Person.*

It was requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one Person. Had his human nature been a distinct human person, the work of our redemption would have been brought about by two persons, which would each have had the character of Mediator; unless two persons could be so united as to constitute but one, which is no better than a contradiction.

It is farther observed, in the Answer under our present consideration, that there were works to be performed proper to each nature. In the human nature, he was to perform every thing which implied subjection, obedience, or suffering. And, though none of these could be performed by him, in his divine nature; yet an infinite worth, value, and dignity, was to be added to them, which was not so much the result of any thing done by him in that nature, as of the union of the human nature with it. On this account, the obedience he performed had, in a relative sense, the same value as if it had been performed in his divine nature. Hence, it is said, 'God purchased the church with his own blood.'<sup>g</sup>

We may add, that as each nature was distinct, and their properties not in the least confounded, as was before observed; so we often read, in scripture, of distinct properties attributed to the same person which are opposed to each other, namely, mortality and immortality, weakness and omnipotence, dependence and independence, &c. But this could not, with any propriety of speaking, be applied to him, had he not been God and man in the same person. This is generally styled, by divines, 'a communication of properties.'<sup>h</sup> We must observe, concerning it, that the properties of the one nature are not predicated of the other; as the Lutherans suppose, when they conclude that the human nature of Christ is omnipresent, and found upon that idea their doctrine of Consubstantiation. But we assert, that the properties of the one nature are predicated of the same person to whom the other nature belongs. Hence, when we say, that the Person who was God obeyed and suffered, or the Person who was man paid an infinite price to the justice of God, we are far from asserting that the Godhead of Christ obeyed, or the manhood merited.<sup>i</sup> This is the necessary result of his two natures being united in one Person. There are two things observed in illustrating this matter.

1. That the works of each nature must be accepted of God for us, as the works of the whole Person, or of the same Person. If the nature that obeyed and suffered had been a human person, his obedience and sufferings could not have been of infinite value, or accepted by God as a sufficient price of redemption. They could not have had this value reflected on them, had they not been the works of a divine Person; and those rays of divine glory which shone forth in his human nature, could have had no immediate relation to it, had it been a distinct Person from that of his Godhead.

2. It is farther observed, that those works which were performed by him in each nature, are to be relied on by us as the works of the whole Person. This reliance contains an instance of adoration, and supposes the Person who performs the works to be God, which he was not in his human nature. We are, therefore, to adore our Mediator, and rely on the works performed by him in his human nature, as he is God and man in one Person. As we have sufficient ground from scripture, to conclude that the Mediator is the object of divine adoration; so we are to depend

<sup>f</sup> Job xxxiii. 6.      <sup>g</sup> Acts xx. 28.      <sup>h</sup> See Sect. 'The Personal Properties of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,' under Quest. ix, x, xi.      <sup>i</sup> This is generally styled by divines, *Communicatio idiomatum in concreto, non in abstracto.*



on him, as a divine Person, for salvation, and our worship does not terminate on his human nature, but on his deity. But, if his human nature had been a distinct human person, we could not be said to adore him that died for us and rose again. On all these grounds, therefore, it is necessary that he should be not only God and Man, but that these two natures should be united in one Person.

## THE TITLES AND OFFICES OF THE MEDIATOR.

QUESTION XLI. *Why was our Mediator called Jesus?*

ANSWER. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.

QUESTION XLII. *Why was our Mediator called Christ?*

ANSWER. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure, and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

HAVING considered our Mediator as God and man, in one person, we are now to speak of him as having those glorious titles and characters attributed to him, which are expressive of his mediatorial work and dignity. He is variously denominated in scripture as Mediator. Sometimes he is called 'Lord';<sup>k</sup> at other times 'Jesus';<sup>l</sup> elsewhere, 'The Lord Jesus';<sup>m</sup> also, 'The Lord Christ';<sup>n</sup> and in other places, 'The Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>o</sup> He is called 'Lord,' to denote the infinite dignity of his person as God equal with the Father. This name, as was observed under a foregoing Answer,<sup>p</sup> is given him in the New Testament, in the same sense in which he is called 'Jehovah' in the Old. It is given him also to denote his divine sovereignty, as the Governor of the world and the church, and particularly as executing his kingly office as Mediator. In the two Answers, under our present consideration, he is farther described by his mediatorial characters, 'Jesus,' and 'Christ.'

### *The Meaning of the Name Jesus.*

Our Mediator is very often called Jesus in the New Testament. This name signifies 'a Saviour,' as was particularly intimated by the angel who gave direction, before his birth,<sup>q</sup> that he should be so called. He is styled not only our Saviour, but 'our salvation,' in the abstract. Thus the prophet, foretelling his incarnation, says, 'Behold, thy salvation cometh; his reward is with him, and his work before him';<sup>r</sup> and when Simeon held him in his arms, 'He blessed God and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'<sup>s</sup> He is a Saviour, as he brings about salvation for us, and we attain it by him; and he may be styled our salvation, as our eternal blessedness consists in the enjoyment of him. Salvation includes a preserving and delivering us from all evil; which some call the negative idea of it. It includes also a conferring on us of the greatest good; which is the positive idea of it. In saving us from evil, he is sometimes said to 'deliver us from this present evil world.'<sup>t</sup> Elsewhere we are said to be 'saved from wrath through him.'<sup>u</sup> As all the deliverance we experience or hope for, is included in the word 'salvation,' so are all the spiritual blessings wherewith we are blessed in this or in a better world. On this account, he who is the purchaser and Author of these, is called Jesus.

1. Since Christ is called Jesus, let us be exhorted to take heed that we do not entertain any unworthy thoughts of him, or of that salvation which he has procured. Let us not suppose that the salvation is indefinite or indeterminate; or that he did not come into the world to save a certain number, who shall eventually obtain

<sup>k</sup> Phil. iv. 5.

<sup>o</sup> Colos. i. 2.

<sup>s</sup> Luke ii. 28—30.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. i. 21.

<sup>p</sup> See pages 170—179.

<sup>t</sup> Gal. i. 4.

<sup>m</sup> Acts ix. 17.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. i. 21.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. v. 9.

<sup>n</sup> Colos. iii. 24.

<sup>r</sup> Isa. lxii. 11.

this blessing ; or that he is the Redeemer, and consequently the Saviour, of many who shall finally perish, which is little better than a contradiction. Nor let us suppose that it is in the power of man to make his salvation of none effect. Whatever difficulties there may be in the way, he will certainly overcome them ; otherwise he would be called Jesus, or a Saviour, to no purpose. Hence, they who suppose him to be the Saviour of all mankind, upon the uncertain condition that they improve their natural powers, or that they so use the liberty of their will as to render his purpose relating to their salvation effectual, do not give him that glory which belongs to him as bearing the name of Jesus.

2. Let us take heed that we do not extenuate his salvation to our own discouragement ; as though he were not able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, or did not come into the world to save the chief of sinners ; or as though we had certain ground to conclude our case to be so deplorable that we are out of the reach of his salvation.

3. Let none presume, without ground, that he is their Saviour, or that they have an interest in him as such, while in an unconverted state ; or vainly conclude, that they shall be saved by him, without faith in him, or subjection to him.

4. Let this name ' Jesus ' tend to excite in us the greatest thankfulness, especially if we have experienced the beginning of the work of salvation ; and let us encourage ourselves to hope, that having begun the good work in us, he will finish it, when he shall appear, a second time, without sin unto salvation.

### *The Meaning of the Name Christ.*

Our Mediator is called ' Christ,' or as it is generally expressed in the Old Testament, ' the Messiah.' This name signifies a person anointed. Thus it is said, ' We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ,'<sup>x</sup> or as it is in the margin, ' the Anointed.' As anointing was made use of under the ceremonial law, in the public inauguration and investiture of prophets, priests, and kings, in their respective offices, they are, for that reason, called ' God's anointed.' Thus it is said, concerning the prophets, ' Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'<sup>y</sup> Kings are likewise so styled. Samuel says, ' Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.'<sup>z</sup> These were often anointed, though not always.<sup>a</sup> The priests, however, were always anointed, when they entered on their office. The high priest is described, as he ' upon whose head the anointing oil was poured.' So we read of ' the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.'<sup>b</sup> This was not an insignificant ceremony, or merely political, in which respect it is used in our day, in the inauguration of kings. But it was an ordinance to signify God's designation of persons to the office which they were to execute ; and in, using it, they were to expect those qualifications which were necessary, and to depend upon him for them. It was more especially designed, however, to typify the solemn inauguration and investiture of our Saviour, in the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of his church ; and in allusion to it, he is called ' the Messiah,' or ' the

<sup>x</sup> John i. 41.

<sup>y</sup> Psal. cv. 15.

<sup>z</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

<sup>a</sup> Prophets were, indeed, often set apart for that office, without anointing. It seems probable, however, from the command of God to Elijah to anoint Elisha to be a prophet in his room, that when they were called in an extraordinary manner, to be public prophets, and in that respect, as is said concerning the prophet Jeremiah, (chap. i. 10.) ' set over nations and kingdoms,' they were not only sanctified and ordained to their office, but the ceremony of anointing was used, especially when some other prophet was appointed to install them. As for kings, though they were not always anointed, yet the ceremony was generally used, as is observed by some Jewish writers, when the kingdom was rent out of the hand of one, and another was, by immediate divine direction, appointed to reign in his stead. Thus, when the kingdom was taken from Saul, David was anointed. The ceremony was used also in other instances, though the crown was inherited by lineal descent, when any other made pretensions to it. Thus David commanded Solomon to be anointed, because Adonijah pretended to it,—1 Kings i. 34. And Joash was anointed, though he had a right to the crown, as descending from Ahaziah, who was king before him, because the crown had, for some time, been usurped by Athaliah,—2 Kings xi. 12. In these, and similar cases, kings were installed in their office by unction, though in other instances, it was not universally practised.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxxxiii. 2.



Christ.' His anointing was not external, or visible, with material oil; but it signified, in a spiritual sense, his receiving a commission from the Father to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. On this account he is styled, God's 'holy child Jesus, whom he had anointed.'<sup>c</sup> This unction, as it was of a spiritual nature, so it was attended with greater circumstances of glory; and the offices he was appointed to execute, were more spiritual, extensive, and advantageous, than theirs who were his types. The psalmist says of him, 'God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows.'<sup>d</sup> He was anointed to execute his prophetic office, 'to preach the gospel to the poor.'<sup>e</sup> He was anointed also to execute his priestly office. The prophet Daniel speaks of him, as 'finishing transgression, making an end of sin, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness,' which he did as a Priest; and then he speaks of 'anointing' him, who was 'most holy,' as infinitely excelling all those who were anointed with holy oil. He is said to be anointed also to execute his kingly office. With respect to this, he is called the Lord's anointed; and God says, concerning him, 'I have set,' or, as it is in the margin, 'anointed, my King upon my holy hill of Zion.'<sup>f</sup> Now, there are three things which are more especially intended in this unction, which are particularly mentioned in this Answer.

1. His being set apart or separated from the rest of mankind, as the only Person who was designed to execute these offices, together with his public investiture in them. For rightly understanding this, let it be considered that there was an eternal designation of him by the Father to these offices. Thus the apostle speaks of him as one 'who was foreordained before the foundation of the world.'<sup>g</sup> Some think that this eternal designation of him is intended also by that expression of the psalmist, 'I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;'<sup>h</sup> and that it is intended likewise by the expression, 'I was set up from everlasting.'<sup>i</sup> This we may call his eternal inauguration, which was the foundation, ground, and reason of his incarnation, or of that inauguration or investiture which was visible to men in time.

The visible inauguration of Christ in time is the second thing to be considered, in his being set apart to execute these offices. When he came into the world, there was a glorious declaration given, both to angels and to men, that he was the Person upon whom God had conferred this honour. Accordingly, he as Mediator received glory from the angels, by a divine warrant. So some understand that scripture, 'When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.'<sup>j</sup> Elsewhere, too, we read<sup>m</sup> of the angels being sent, as heralds, to make proclamation of this matter to men, at his coming into the world. And, when he entered on his public ministry, there was, immediately after his baptism, a divine declaration given, as a farther visible confirmation of his being set apart. 'The heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'<sup>n</sup> John the Baptist was immediately raised up, as a prophet, to signify to the world his being set apart to the mediatorial offices. This he did at the time when our Saviour entered on his public ministry. He speaks of him as 'preferred before himself;'<sup>o</sup> not only as having a more excellent nature, but as being set apart to a higher office, than that to which he was called. Accordingly, he styles him, 'The Lamb of God;'<sup>p</sup> intimating, that God had set him apart, as the great sacrifice which was to be offered for sin.<sup>q</sup> Soon after, he gives another testimony to this, together with a glorious, yet just, character of the Person who was invested with the mediatorial authority. He says, concerning him, 'A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.' These words are as if he had said, 'I have not received this honour of being the Christ, and of doing the works which he does; but it is given him from heaven. I am not 'the bridegroom' of the church, but 'his friend,' who 'rejoice greatly, because of his voice.' 'What he hath seen and heard, that he testified.'

<sup>c</sup> Acts iv. 27.<sup>d</sup> Psal. xlv. 7.<sup>e</sup> Luke iv. 18.<sup>f</sup> Dan. ix. 24.<sup>g</sup> Psal. ii. 2. compared with ver. 6.<sup>h</sup> 1 Pet. i. 20. <sup>i</sup> Psal. ii. 7.<sup>k</sup> Prov. viii. 23.<sup>l</sup> Heb. i. 6.<sup>m</sup> Luke ii. 10, 11.<sup>n</sup> Matt. iii. 16, 17.<sup>o</sup> John i. 29, 30.

And God hath sent him; 'whose word he speaketh.' 'For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him; the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.'<sup>p</sup> He was, therefore, set apart by him, to perform the work of a Mediator, which belongeth not unto me."

2. Christ was furnished with authority, or had a commission given him, to perform the work he was engaged in, as Mediator. This was absolutely necessary. The apostle says, concerning the priesthood in general, 'No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God,' and authorized by him to perform it, 'as was Aaron; so also Christ glorified not himself, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee; and thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.'<sup>q</sup> As it was reckoned an intrusion, and no other than an act of profaneness, for any one to exercise a sacred office without a divine warrant, it was necessary that our Saviour should be furnished with one. The work he was to perform was glorious: the consequences of it were of the highest importance; and his services would not have been accepted, or availed to answer their great ends, had he not received a commission from the Father. That he came into the world with this commission and authority, derived from him, he constantly asserts and proves. He asserts it, when speaking concerning himself, he says, that 'God the Father had sealed him';<sup>r</sup> and when he elsewhere says, 'I have power to lay down my life, and to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father.'<sup>s</sup> And he not only asserts but proves it. Every miracle which he wrought was a confirmation of it; and, in every one, a divine testimony was affixed to this commission. Accordingly he says, 'The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.'<sup>t</sup> And elsewhere, when he asserts his authority, and proves that 'the words which he spake, he spake not of himself';<sup>u</sup> he adds, 'the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.'<sup>x</sup> He thus appeals to those miraculous works which were performed, either by himself, or by the Father. This he might well do, because the Father and he had the same divine power. And, by appealing to these, he intimates that the commission which he received from the Father was attested in this extraordinary manner.

3. Our Saviour's unction included an ability to execute those offices which he was engaged in as Mediator. We formerly observed, that when persons, under the ceremonial law, were anointed to execute the offices either of prophet, priest, or king, not only was their unction an ordinance, to signify that they had a divine warrant to execute them, but they were thereby given to expect those qualifications which were necessary to the discharge of them. God never calls to an office, but he qualifies for it. Thus our Saviour was furnished with ability, as well as authority. This was more especially applicable to his human nature, in which he was to obey and suffer. As to his divine nature, it could not be the subject of a derived power, or of qualification conferred upon it. Now this ability, with which our Saviour was furnished as man, was that which rendered him fit to perform the work which he came into the world to do. As a Prophet, he was qualified to preach the gospel with greater wisdom and authority than all others, who ever were engaged in this work. His very enemies confessed, that 'never man spake like him.'<sup>y</sup> He had continual assistance from God, which preserved him from all mistakes; so that what he delivered was infallibly true, and, as such, to be depended on. He was furnished also with zeal for the glory of God, yet such as was tempered with sympathy, meekness, and compassion towards his people,—with a holy courage, resolution, and fortitude which preserved him from fainting, or being discouraged under all his sufferings,—and with a constant disposition and inclination to refer all to the glory of the Father, and not to assume any branch of divine honour to his human nature. By this means, the whole discharge of his ministry was acceptable, both to God and to man.

#### *The Offices of the Mediator.*

Having thus shown the reasons why our Saviour is called Christ, we are led to

p John iii. 27—35  
t John x. 25.

q Heb. v. 4—5.  
u John xiv. 10, 11.

r John vi. 27.

s John x. 18.  
x John vii. 47.



consider the offices which he was anointed to execute, on account of which he is styled, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. Here we shall premise some things in general concerning these three offices. Afterwards we shall treat of each of them, as they are described in the following Answers.

1. Concerning the number of the offices which he executes, they are three. Some have inquired, whether there are not more than three executed by him; inasmuch as there are several characters and relations which Christ is described by, and is said to stand in to his people, besides those of Prophet, Priest, and King. Thus he is styled, 'the Head of the body, the church,'<sup>y</sup> 'an Husband' to it,<sup>z</sup> and 'a Bridegroom';<sup>a</sup> and elsewhere he is said to perform the office of 'a Shepherd.' He styles himself, 'the good Shepherd';<sup>b</sup> and he is called, 'the Captain of our salvation.'<sup>c</sup> Many other characters also of a similar nature are given him. Some have hence taken occasion to think, that several of these contain ideas distinct from those of a Prophet, Priest, and King, and therefore that there are more offices than these executed by him. But all that needs be said is, that these, and other characters and relations which are ascribed to Christ in scripture, are all included in or reducible to one or other of these three offices. [See Note 3 L, page 494.] We have, therefore, no reason to conclude that he executes any other offices, distinct from them, as Mediator.

2. The condition of fallen man, the method in which God designed to bring him to salvation, and the adaptation of that method to the end intended, rendered it necessary that Christ should execute these three offices. We are all of us, by nature, ignorant of divine truth, and prejudiced against it. 'The natural man,' says the apostle, 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'<sup>d</sup> It is necessary, therefore, that Christ should execute the office of a Prophet to lead us into all truth, and give us this spiritual discerning of it. Moreover, we are all 'guilty before God,'<sup>e</sup> and can by no means make atonement, give satisfaction to his justice, or procure a pardon; nor can we plead any thing done by us, as a ground of our receiving pardon. We need, therefore, that Christ should execute the office of a Priest, and so first make atonement, and then intercession, for us. Again, we are all, by nature, obstinate and rebellious, and exposed to many dangers and enemies who are too strong for us. It is necessary, therefore, that Christ should execute the office of a King, to subdue our corruptions, and restrain and conquer our enemies.

The way in which God brings his people to salvation, also requires Christ's executing his threefold office. Salvation must be purchased, proclaimed, and applied. The first of these respects Christ's priestly office; the second, his prophetic; and the third, his kingly. Accordingly he is said to be 'made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption';<sup>f</sup> and elsewhere he styles himself, 'The Way, the Truth, and the Life.'<sup>g</sup> Moreover, in the execution of these offices, and bringing us thereby to salvation, he deals with God and man in different respects; with God, more especially, as a Priest, in satisfying his justice, and procuring his favour. As the High Priest under the law, who was a type of Christ's priestly office, is said to have been 'ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins';<sup>h</sup> so Christ, our great High Priest, by offering himself a sacrifice, performed that part of his ministry which pertained to God, in the behalf of men. He deals with God, also, by appearing in his presence, continually making intercession for them. On the other hand, he deals with men, as designing to bring them to God; and this he does more especially as a Prophet and a King.

3. These three offices, which Christ executes, are distinct, and therefore not to be confounded. This we maintain against Socinus and his followers. They speak of Christ, indeed, as a Prophet, Priest, and King; which they are obliged to do, because the words are so frequently mentioned in scripture. Yet the sense they give of them amounts to little more than an acknowledgment of his prophetic

y Coloss. i. 18.

d 1 Cor. ii. 14.

z Isai. liv. 5.

e Rom. iii. 19.

a John iii. 29.

f 1 Cor. i. 30.

b John x. 14.

g John xiv. 6.

c Heb. ii. 10.

h Heb. v. 1.

office. Even this, as they explain it, includes nothing more than what other prophets who went before him either were, or might have been, qualified to perform. For any one who is under divine inspiration may infallibly declare the will of God, and give forth those laws by which God has ordained that his church should be governed; and our Saviour, according to them, does little more than this. They speak of him, indeed, as a Priest; but not as making satisfaction for our sins to the justice of God, nor as interceding in virtue thereof, but only as putting up prayers and supplications to him on our behalf, little different from those prayers and supplications which were put up by other prophets in behalf of the people.—Again, they speak of him as a King; but not as subduing our wills, or conquering our enemies by almighty power. Or, if they allow that he subdues us to himself as a King; yet, in their farther explanation of his doing so, they mean nothing by it but his gaining us over to his side by arguments, freeing us from our ignorance, and overcoming our prejudices against truth by a clear revelation of it. Or, if they speak of his conquering our enemies, they intend nothing by it but his guarding and defending his people, by furnishing them with arguments to resist their subtle attempts against them. Now, all these things are reducible to his prophetic office: so that, though they speak of him as executing three offices, it is no more than if they should assert that he executes only one. The most they intend is, that he is a Teacher sent from God, and consequently not much superior in excellency to Moses, who was a prophet raised up from among his brethren, and had the honourable character given him that he was ‘faithful in all his house.’ Yet the apostle proves, by what he says of our Lord Jesus, that ‘he was counted worthy of more glory, as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house;’ and he farther styles him a divine Person, when he says, ‘he that built all things is God.’<sup>1</sup>

4. These three offices which Christ executes are not to be divided, especially as they are executed in a way which is effectual to the salvation of those who are concerned in them. He may, indeed, in an objective way, reveal the will of God, or give laws to his church, as a Prophet, without working savingly upon the understanding. He may also execute his kingly office, as a Judge, in pouring forth the vials of his wrath on his enemies, without subduing the stubbornness of their wills, or bringing them to the obedience of faith. Nevertheless, we must conclude that, whosoever he executes these offices in a saving way, he executes them all. Hence, though the offices are distinguished, yet, in the execution of them, they are not divided. Thus, whosoever is so taught by him, as a Prophet, as to be made wise to salvation, is redeemed by his blood as a Priest, overcome by his power as a King, and brought into subjection to his will in all things. So to all for whom, as a Priest, he hath purchased peace, he will, in his own time, proclaim it as a Prophet; and enable them to believe in him, by making them willing in the day of his power.

5. He executes these offices in a twofold state; first, of humiliation, and then, of exaltation, with different circumstances agreeable to each. This twofold state will be considered in some following Answers. What we shall observe at present concerning it is, that that part of Christ’s priestly office in which he made atonement for sin, was executed on earth in his state of humiliation; while the other part of it, consisting in his intercession, together with some branches of his prophetic and kingly office, were executed both in earth and heaven, though in a different manner, agreeable to those circumstances of glory in which he was and is.

i Heb. iii. 2, 3.

[NOTE 3 L. *The Number of Christ’s Offices.*—The classification of Christ’s offices into three, may probably appear, on even slight reflection, to be altogether arbitrary. Mediator, Head, Surety, Redeemer, Paraclete, Pastor, are official names as surely given our Lord in scripture as Prophet, Priest, King. Nor is there any scriptural authority for comprehending these and other titles under three, rather than under any other number. The popular classification claims no higher sanction than the authority of the schoolmen, and is designed solely to promote distinctness and comprehensiveness in our views of the mediatorial character. I have a strong impression, however, that it seriously confuses these views. Let one carefully examine either Dr. Ridgeley’s exposition of the prophetic and the kingly offices, or that of any other approved orthodox divine; and he



will find that what is said respecting either office may, in a great measure, be substituted for what is said respecting the other. The chief, if not the only, difference is, that more is said respecting Christ as a King, than respecting him as a Prophet. His prophetic office is discussed in terms, and exhibited in functions and results, which simply make it a part of his kingly office. The effect of discussing the two as if they were distinct, is the same upon our views of his character as King, as the effect of discussing his suretyship or redemptional work apart from his priesthood, would have upon our views of his character as Priest. His being a Surety or a Redeemer is no less included in his being a Priest, than his being a Prophet is included in his being a King.

The grand, and almost only, authority for our Lord's being called a Prophet is the passage: 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken,' Deut. xviii. 15. Now the distinctive character of Moses was that of a lawgiver and a ruler. As a lawgiver, he was distinguished from even such prophets as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha; and as both a lawgiver and a ruler, he was distinguished from all the prophets whose official work was simply to 'reveal or declare the will of God.' But Christ is 'a Prophet like unto him.' What follows but that, as a Prophet, he is the ruler and the lawgiver, or, in other words, the King of his people? Accordingly, the apostle Peter, in referring to Moses' prediction, quotes it as a proof that Christ shall reign at the right hand of power till he subdue all his enemies. 'Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.'

The only apparent scriptural reason which I am aware of having been assigned for regarding Christ's prophetic work as distinct from his kingship, is that, in some instances, the ancient prophets, like priests and kings, were anointed. This reason, however, is not valid, but rather operates against the opinion which it is designed to support, unless an instance could be adduced of the anointing of a prophet who *was not a ruler or judge*. If any individual was at the same time judge and prophet, and if he was anointed while all persons who were prophets only were not anointed, what are we to infer but that he received his anointing in connexion solely with his judgeship? Anointing appears to have been practised only as regarded either a ministration with God for man, or a ministration with man for God. A priest performed services toward God, and a king performed services toward man; the one conducted the affairs of the sanctuary, and the other conducted the affairs of the congregation; the former worked out reconciliation with God, and the latter controlled the enmity, and directed the obedience of men; and both were anointed as types of the great priest who is King of righteousness, and who 'sits a Priest upon his throne.' When Zechariah beheld our Lord in vision, or saw emblematic representations of his official character and work, there were exhibited to him 'two olive-trees by' the golden candlestick in the holy place, 'one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.' 'Then answered I,' says the prophet, 'What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?' Then said he, 'These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth,' Zech. iv. 2, 11, 14. To explain further to him the import of his vision, he is told that there are two crowns, the silver and the golden, the priestly crown and the regal,—that these are put upon the head of Joshua, the high priest, the type of the Saviour,—that 'the man whose name is THE BRANCH shall sit and rule upon his throne, and shall be a priest upon his throne,' while 'the counsel of peace shall be between' his crowns, and his priesthood and kingship united in mutual subserviency and co-operation, Zech. vi. 9—15. See also Heb. vii. 1—3. 'The anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth,' are thus *two*; they both bear rule, the one in a priestly way and the other in a kingly; and they are united in the person of the Branch who is 'a priest upon his throne.' Yet John, who emphatically describes our Lord as 'the faithful and true Witness,' and dwells both in the use of that title and in the use of others, upon the work which is popularly ascribed to him as the prophet of his people, says respecting 'the two witnesses' of one of his visions, 'these are the two olive-trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.'

There is thus, I think, some direct scripture-authority for regarding our Lord's mediatorial offices as comprehended in *two*. This classification, at all events, will be found more conducive to clear, definite conceptions of his character and work than that which views his prophetic work apart from his kingship.—ED.]

## CHRIST'S PROPHETIC OFFICE.

### QUESTION XLIII. *How doth Christ execute the office of a Prophet?*

ANSWER. Christ executeth the office of a Prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

### *The Order of Christ's Prophetic Office.*

BEFORE we consider the parts of Christ's prophetic office, and the manner of his

executing it, we may observe the order in which it is mentioned, as set before his priestly and kingly offices. This may give us occasion to inquire whether it be executed before them.

1. If we consider the natural order of his executing his three offices, or the dependence of the execution of them, one on the other, it must be observed that he first executes his priestly office, and then his prophetic and kingly. Sinners must first be redeemed by his blood, before they can be brought to a saving knowledge of him, or an entire subjection to him. Hence, he first deals with God as a Priest, in our behalf, and thereby prepares the way of salvation, and lays the foundation of it in his oblation and intercession; and then, as a Prophet and King, he deals with men, and thereby brings them to God. So that, if the three offices were to be laid down in their natural order, we must say that Christ executes the office of a Priest, Prophet, and King.

2. If we consider the order in which our Saviour executed these offices, in the exercise of his public ministry, we may say, he first produced his commission, or proclaimed the end of his coming into the world, and proved himself to be the Messiah, and so discovered himself to his people, as the great Prophet of his church; and then, as a Priest, he laid down his life, as a sacrifice for sin; and next, as a King, he conquered his enemies, spoiled principalities and powers, and exerted the exceeding greatness of his power in the application of redemption. It is in this respect that the offices of Christ are generally treated of; and so they are mentioned in the same order in which they are here laid down. His prophetic office, therefore, is first mentioned; and this is what we are now to consider.

#### *Christ's Titles as a Prophet.*

We shall show how Christ is described, in scripture, as the Prophet of his church. There are many expressions whereby his prophetic office is set forth. He is styled, 'a Teacher come from God.'<sup>k</sup> He calls himself our 'Master,'<sup>l</sup> or the Lord of our faith; and, as such, he is distinguished from all other teachers, some of whom affected very much to be called Rabbi, and would persuade the world, by an implicit faith, to believe whatever they said. But our Saviour advises his disciples to refuse that title; for, says he, 'one is your Master, even Christ.' Again, he is called, 'a Lawgiver,'<sup>m</sup> or the one and only Lawgiver; and it is added, that he differs from all other lawgivers, in that 'he is able to save and to destroy.'<sup>n</sup> He is also called, 'the Angel, or Messenger of the covenant,' who reveals the covenant of grace to us, and brings the glad tidings, that God is in him, reconciling the world to himself. He is also called, 'the Apostle' as well as 'the High Priest of our profession';<sup>o</sup> because he was sent by God to publish peace, before he appointed others, who are called apostles, or inferior ministers to him, to pursue the same design. He is likewise styled, 'a Witness to the people,' their 'Leader and Commander';<sup>p</sup> and he is farther described as 'a faithful Witness.'<sup>q</sup> He is set forth also by several metaphorical expressions, which denote the execution of his prophetic office. Thus he is called, 'the Light which shineth in darkness.'<sup>r</sup> The prophet Isaiah likewise describes him, when he says, 'Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.'<sup>s</sup> He is likewise compared to the Sun, the fountain of light, and so called, 'the Sun of righteousness,' which was to 'arise with healing in his wings.'<sup>t</sup> He is called also 'the bright and Morning Star.'<sup>u</sup> By this, and many other expressions to the same purpose, the prophetic office of Christ is set forth in scripture.

#### *Christ's Work as a Prophet.*

We shall now consider what Christ does in the execution of his prophetic office. He is said to reveal the will of God to his church.

k John iii. 2.  
p Isa. lv. 4.  
u Rev. xvii. 16.

l Matt. xxiii. 8.  
q Rev. i. 5.

m Isa. xxxiii. 22.  
r John i. 5.

n James iv. 12.  
s Isa. lx. 1.

o Heb. iii. 1.  
t Mal. iv. 2.



1. How he was qualified for this work, which supposes him to have a perfect knowledge of the divine will. We formerly observed that the Socinians, agreeably to the low thoughts they have of him as a mere creature, suppose that he was unacquainted with the will of God till he entered on his public ministry; and that in order to his being instructed in it, he was, soon after his baptism, taken into heaven and there taught by the Father what he was to impart to mankind. This they suppose to be the meaning of those scriptures which speak of him as 'coming down from heaven,' or 'coming forth from the Father,' into the world,<sup>x</sup> and of his 'speaking as the Father had taught him,' or 'what he had seen with his Father.'<sup>y</sup> We showed the absurdity of this opinion elsewhere, when speaking in defence of our Saviour's deity,<sup>z</sup> and considered that those scriptures which mention his coming down from heaven plainly refer to his incarnation, and that the mode of expression is the same as when God is said, in other scriptures, to come down into this world, by his manifestative presence, which is not inconsistent with his omnipresence. We considered also the groundlessness and absurdity of the conjecture as to Christ's being taken up into heaven soon after his baptism. All, therefore, that I shall add, at present, is, that those scriptures which speak of Christ's being taught the things which he was to impart to the church, as they do not overthrow the omniscience of his divine nature, so they give no countenance to the supposition that his human nature was taken up into heaven to be taught the will of God. In this nature, indeed, he needed instruction, and had no knowledge but what he received by communication; and it is plainly said of him, that 'he increased in wisdom,' as he advanced in age. But the knowledge which he had, as Man, which was sufficient to furnish him for the execution of this office, proceeded from a twofold cause. It proceeded from the union of that nature with his divine Person, the result of which was his having all those perfections that belong to it, of which the knowledge of divine things is one; for it would have been a dishonour to him, as God, to be united to a nature that had the least blemish or defect, or was unqualified for the work which he was to perform in it. Besides this, our Saviour had an unction from the Holy Ghost; which, as was formerly observed, implies not only his receiving a commission, but, together therewith, all necessary qualifications to discharge the work he was engaged in, which include in them his knowing the whole will of God. Accordingly, it is said, 'God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him,'<sup>a</sup> that is, he gave it in a greater measure to him than he ever did to any other, as the work in which he was to engage required it.

2. Let us now consider what is the will of God which Christ reveals. This includes every thing which relates to our salvation, or which is necessary to be known and believed by us in order to it,—namely, that God had an eternal design to glorify his grace, in the recovery of a part of mankind from that guilt and misery in which they were involved, and in putting them into the possession of complete blessedness; and that, in order to this, each of the Persons in the Godhead designed to demonstrate his distinct personal glory, that, in this respect, they might receive adoration and praise from men,—the Father, as sending our Saviour to be a Redeemer,—the Son, as taking that character and work upon him,—and the Spirit, as applying the redemption purchased by him. Moreover, Christ was to make a public proclamation that salvation was attainable, and that the way to attain it was by sinners coming to him as a Mediator, by whom they might have access to the Father. He was also to invite them to come to him by faith, as he often does in the gospel; he was to let them know, that this faith is the gift of God, and that they may expect to attain it in a constant attendance on the ordinances of his own appointment; and he was to encourage them to seek it in this way, by showing them that there are many great and precious promises, which are all put into his hand to apply and make good to his people. These and many other things, which contain the sum and substance of the gospel, are what we understand by the will of God, which Christ communicates, as a Prophet, to his church. It may be observed, too, that these doctrines are such as are mat-

<sup>x</sup> John vi. 38. compared with Chap. xvi. 28.      <sup>y</sup> John viii. 28, 38.  
Christ's Deity from his Perfections,' under Quest. ix, x, xi.

<sup>z</sup> See Sect. 'Proofs of  
a John iii. 34.

ter of pure revelation, such as could not have been known without it, and such as are of the highest importance, and therefore worthy to be made known by so excellent a Person.

*To whom Christ Ministers as a Prophet.*

We are now to consider the persons to whom Christ reveals the will of God, namely, the church. To them the lively oracles of God are committed; and they are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. As for 'the world,' which is sometimes contrasted to the church, it is said that 'by wisdom, it knew not God;' <sup>b</sup> that is, not in the way in which he is revealed in the gospel. But the church, which Christ loved, and for which he gave himself, is said to be 'sanctified by the word.' <sup>c</sup> To them 'it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;' but to others 'it is not given.' <sup>d</sup> The church, therefore, is the seat and the object of the execution of Christ's prophetic, as well as of his other offices. 'They are taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.' <sup>e</sup>

*How Christ Ministers as a Prophet.*

We are now to consider the way and means by which Christ reveals the will of God to the church. There are two ways by which this is done.

1. Christ reveals the will of God objectively. This is an external method of instruction, the effect or consequence of which is our hearing of him by the hearing of the ear, or, as the apostle calls it, our 'having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' <sup>f</sup> This instruction Christ is said to give by the word. He gave it, first, by publishing the glad tidings of salvation in his own Person. His doing this he mentions as one great end for which he was sent into the world. He says, 'I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent.' <sup>g</sup> He, accordingly, styles himself 'the Light of the world;' <sup>h</sup> and it is said that 'he was anointed to preach good tidings unto the meek, sent to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' <sup>i</sup> When he is represented as complying with the call of God, and 'delighting to do his will,' he adds, 'I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.' <sup>k</sup> And, as Christ preached the gospel in his own person; so, when he left the world, he gave commission to others to preach it, and his Spirit to instruct them what they should deliver, by whose inspiration his word was committed to writing, which is the fountain of all truth. By this means, the church attains, as at this day, the knowledge of the divine will.

2. Our Saviour reveals the will of God to his people, in a subjective way. This is internal; and he deals in it with their hearts, which he disposes and fits to receive the truth. Hereby he opens the eyes of the understanding to see a beauty and glory in the gospel, and inclines all the powers and faculties of the soul to be conformed to it. This he does more especially in those in whom he executes his prophetic office effectually unto salvation. His teaching in this way is styled, in this Answer, his executing his prophetic office by his Spirit; as distinguished from the execution of it by his word. We read sometimes, in scripture, of the Spirit's teaching us. Our Saviour tells his disciples, that 'he,' that is, the Spirit, 'would guide them into all truth;' <sup>l</sup> and the apostle speaks of believers, as 'having their souls purified, in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' <sup>m</sup> At other times, we read of Christ's teaching by his Spirit. Now, there is no essential difference between Christ's teaching as God, and the Spirit's teaching; for the Divine glory of the

b 1 Cor. i. 21.

g Luke iv. 43.

m 1 Pet. i. 22.

c Eph. v. 26.

h John viii. 12.

d Matt. xiii. 11.

i Isa. lxi. 1.

e Eph. iv. 21.

k Psal. xl. 9, 10.

f Rom. ii. 20.

l John xvi. 13.



Son and Spirit, to which this effect is attributed, is the same. Christ's teaching by his Spirit denotes only, as was observed under a foregoing Answer, the suberviency of the Spirit's acting herein, to Christ's executing this branch of his prophetic office, whereby he demonstrates his personal glory.<sup>n</sup>

*The Periods of Christ's Ministry as a Prophet.*

We are now to consider the various ages in which Christ is said to execute this office. That he did this after his incarnation, first, in his own Person, and then, by taking care that his gospel should be preached in all succeeding ages, until his second coming, has been already considered. We may observe also, that Christ executed his prophetic office before his incarnation. It is said, that, 'by his Spirit, he preached unto the spirits in prison,'<sup>o</sup> that is, to the world before the flood, who are represented, in the words immediately following, as disobedient, 'when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.'<sup>o</sup> So that Noah, who was a prophet, was his inferior minister, raised up and spirited by him to preach to the world. His preaching is, on that account, called Christ's preaching; and herein, accordingly, he executed his prophetic office. He is said also to have given the law from mount Sinai. The apostle's words seem to intimate this, when he says, 'Whose voice shook the earth,'<sup>p</sup> that is, mount Sinai, which trembled when he gave the law from it. That this refers to our Saviour, appears from the words immediately foregoing, wherein it is said, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh,' namely Christ; 'for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth,' that is, from mount Sinai, or when he spake on earth, 'much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth,'<sup>q</sup> &c. Moreover, that he executed his prophetic office before his incarnation, and thereby led his church into the knowledge of divine truth, is evident from the account we have, in scripture, of his appearing to them in the form of a man, or an angel. This he did more frequently before the word of God was committed to writing, and afterwards occasionally, in following ages. Thus he appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and sent him into Egypt to demand liberty for Israel. Afterwards, appearing in the pillar of the cloud and fire, he led them through the Red sea; and he is described as the Angel which was with Moses 'in the church in the wilderness, which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles.'<sup>r</sup> This is a farther proof, of what was formerly mentioned, that he gave the law from mount Sinai. And while they travelled through the wilderness, 'he led them about,' or went before them in the pillar of cloud, 'and instructed them.'<sup>s</sup> Hence, all the knowledge of divine things which they attained was the result of the execution of his prophetic office to them. And when at any time they opposed Moses, his under minister, he appeared in Person and vindicated him; as in the particular instance occasioned by Aaron and Miriam's speaking against him, wherein it is said, 'The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and said, If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream; my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.'<sup>t</sup> This is a farther intimation that Christ then executed his prophetic office, by inspiring the prophets who were raised up at that time.<sup>u</sup>

To conclude this Head, we may observe the difference between Christ's executing his prophetic office, before and after his incarnation. In the former, as was but now hinted, he occasionally assumed the likeness of the human nature, that he might the better converse with man, but was not really incarnate. In the latter, he de-

<sup>n</sup> See Sect. 'The Economy of the Persons in the Godhead,' under Quest. x, x, xi.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.

<sup>p</sup> Heb. xii. 26.

<sup>q</sup> Ver. 25.

<sup>r</sup> Acts vii. 38.

<sup>s</sup> Deut. xxxii. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Numb. xii. 5-7.

<sup>u</sup> The force of this argument, and the application of these and several other scriptures to Christ, depends upon the supposition, which we take for granted, and which, were it needful, might easily be proved, that whenever a divine Person is said, in scripture, to appear in the form of an angel, or to appear in a cloud as a symbol or emblem of his presence, he is always understood to be our Saviour.

livered the mind and will of God, as dwelling in our nature. Before his incarnation, he discovered what was necessary to be known by the church at that time, and gave them those promises which related to the work of our redemption which was to be performed by him. But in the present execution of his prophetic office, he opens a more glorious scene, and represents all those promises as having their accomplishment in him, and displays the divine perfections, in bringing about our salvation, in their greatest beauty and lustre.

## CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

**QUESTION XLIV.** *How doth Christ execute the office of a Priest ?*

**ANSWER.** Christ executeth the office of a Priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice, without spot, to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people, and in making continual intercession for them.

IN considering Christ's priestly office, as described in this Answer, we may observe the two great branches of it, namely, his offering himself a sacrifice, and his making intercession. There are several scriptures which expressly mention both. Thus he is said, 'through the eternal Spirit, to have offered himself, without spot, to God ;'<sup>x</sup> and then is described as having 'entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'<sup>y</sup> Elsewhere also the apostle states that he 'hath an unchangeable priesthood, and is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him ;' and that this is founded on his offering up himself, and 'making intercession for them.'<sup>z</sup>

### *What it is to be a Priest.*

We may observe the reason of Christ being styled a Priest. This denomination was taken from those who exercised the priestly office under the ceremonial law, who were types of him as such. The office of the priesthood was executed by various persons, appointed to this service. A priest was a public minister, who was to serve at the altar, 'to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.'<sup>a</sup> That these were offered in all the ages of the church, after the fall of man, appears from the sacrifice Abel offered. This the apostle calls an 'excellent' one ; and he says that Abel 'obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.'<sup>b</sup> It follows from this, that the ordinance which Abel observed in offering his sacrifice, was instituted by God. Yet it does not appear that there was, in that early age of the church, a set of men solemnly and publicly invested in this office. The heads of families are generally supposed to have been the public ministers in holy things, and particularly priests ; though they do not appear to have been then so styled. In this state, matters continued till about the time God brought Israel out of Egypt, when, by his appointment, all the first-born of the children of Israel were consecrated to him. These officiated as priests during the small interval of time till the priesthood was settled in the tribe of Levi. On this occasion God says, 'I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born, because all the first-born are mine ; for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel.'<sup>c</sup> When God gave the ceremonial law from mount Sinai, he appointed that tribe to minister as priests in holy things. Some of them had one part of the ministry of the sanctuary committed to them, and others another. The priesthood, or the charge of offering gifts and sacrifices, in particular, was more especially committed to the family of Aaron. Of this family the eldest son, in their respective generations, was generally advanced to the high priesthood ; and other descendants from him were common priests, who acted under him, or were assistants to him in all the

<sup>x</sup> Heb. ix. 14.  
<sup>b</sup> Heb. xi. 4.

<sup>y</sup> Ver. 24.

<sup>z</sup> Heb. vii. 24, 25, 27.  
<sup>c</sup> Numb. iii. 12, 13.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. v. 1.



parts of his ministry, excepting that which respected his entering into the holy of holies. These were invested in their respective offices by unction; though the high priest's office and unction had some things peculiar, in which it exceeded theirs. And they were all types of Christ's priesthood; though the high priest was so in an eminent degree.

### *The Types of Christ's Priesthood.*

We shall now consider the priesthood of Christ, as typified under the ceremonial law; and that either by the service which was commonly performed by the high priest, and other priests under him, or as it was typified by Melchizedek, who is occasionally mentioned in scripture as shadowing forth Christ's priesthood in some particular instances which were not contained in other types.

I. We shall speak concerning the priests under the law, as types of Christ's priesthood, and particularly show wherein their priesthood agrees with or differs from his. We shall first show, in three particulars, wherein they agree.

1. 'Every high priest was taken from among men,' as the apostle observes,<sup>d</sup> 'and was ordained for men in things pertaining to God.' We may add, that every high priest was taken from among his brethren, and so must be a member of that church in whose name he ministered, and of which he was the head by the dignity of his office. In this, he was a lively type of Christ, who, in order to his being an High Priest, became man, that he might perform this ministry for men in things pertaining to God. The validity of his office, it is true, or the efficacy of it to answer its designed end, arose from the dignity of his Person, as God; yet the matter of it, or the ministry he performed, required that he should be taken from among men, and have all the essential properties of the human nature. Hence, as the high priest was taken out of the church, or from among his brethren, and, by office, was their head; so Christ was a member of the church, and, as such, complied with those ordinances which God had instituted in it, and from the dignity of his Person and office, was its Head. As a member of it, he was exposed to the same temptations and miseries as they are, and so is able to sympathize with, and succour them under all their temptations; <sup>e</sup> and, as its Head, he manages all affairs relating to it, and expects that all his people should be entirely subjected to him.

2. The matter of the priest's office, or the things which were offered by him, were, as was before observed, gifts and sacrifices for the remission of sins. This blessing could not be attained without shedding of blood. 'Without shedding of blood,' says the apostle, 'is no remission.'<sup>f</sup> Hence, Christ was to redeem his people, and to procure forgiveness of sins and make atonement for them, by sacrifice, or by the shedding of blood.

3. After the high priest had offered sacrifices, there was another part of that ministry which was peculiar to himself, in which he was an eminent type of Christ. This he performed but once a-year, on the great day of expiation, when he went in to the holiest of all within the veil, with blood and incense. The blood he sprinkled on the mercy-seat over the ark, and caused the smoke of the incense to ascend and cover the mercy-seat; and thence he received an intimation from God, that the sacrifices which he had offered for the people were accepted. After this, he went out, and blessed them in the name of the Lord. Now, in all these services, he was a lively type of Christ's executing his priestly office.<sup>g</sup> Christ first offered an acceptable sacrifice for us on earth; and then, as was typified by the priest's entering into the holy of holies, he entered into heaven to present his sacrifice before God, and to make intercession for us. As the consequence of this, he blesses his people, in turning them from all their iniquities, and in conferring all the other fruits and effects of his sacrifice upon them. Thus Christ's priesthood was shadowed forth by that ministry which was performed by the priests under the ceremonial law.

We shall now show, in six particulars, wherein the Levitical priests differed, in their priestly office and ministry, from Christ.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. v. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. iv. 15. compared with chap. v. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. ix. 22.

<sup>g</sup> Heb. ix. 3, 7. compared with Lev. xvi. 14.

1. The priests under the law were mere men. But Christ, though truly man, was more than a man. Though he was made, in all the essential properties of the human nature, like unto us; yet he had a divine nature, in which he was equal with God. His ministry, therefore, could not but be infinitely more valuable than that of any who were types of him.

2. The priests under the law were of the tribe of Levi; and therefore theirs is called by the apostle, 'the Levitical priesthood.'<sup>n</sup> But our Saviour, as man, was of the tribe of Judah; and therefore did not derive his priesthood from them by descent, as they did from one another.<sup>i</sup>

3. The sacrifices which were offered by the priests under the law, were no other than the blood of beasts, appointed for that purpose. But Christ offered his own blood.<sup>k</sup>

4. The priests under the law were sinners. Accordingly, Aaron was obliged, 'to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's.'<sup>l</sup> But Christ needed not to do this; for 'he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.'<sup>m</sup>

5. The sacrifices offered by the priests under the law, could not expiate, or 'take away sins.'<sup>n</sup> But Christ, by the offering which he made, 'for ever perfected them that are sanctified,' or made a full atonement for all sin. Now, as it is said that it was impossible for sin to be expiated by the sacrifices under the law, we are to inquire in what sense atonement was made, or could not be made, by them. If the sin was of such a nature as that it was punishable by human judicature, the making atonement by sacrifice, in many instances, put a stop to prosecution, and took away the guilt which the person had contracted, as to any farther proceedings of men against him. Such a deliverance by sacrifice was an ordinance appointed by God, in which the offender had an external and visible recourse to the blood of Jesus, signified by the blood which he offered. The offering of sacrifice, too, is supposed to have been accompanied with repentance for the sin committed, which gave satisfaction to the church, as to what concerned the matter as offensive to them. They could then demand no more of the offender, in order to their declaring, that, so far as they were judges, his guilt was expiated by that which was signified by the sacrifice which he brought, and which was offered for him; and hence the crime which he committed was pardoned. There were some crimes, it is true, which were to be punished with death; and, in the case of these, the church was not to receive satisfaction by sacrifice, nor were proceedings against the guilty person to be stopped by that means. Among other crimes, that of wilful murder was one which admitted of no sacrifice. This I think to be the meaning of what the psalmist says, 'Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it,'<sup>o</sup> implying that the guilt of blood was such that he had, by contracting it, forfeited his life. For though no subject had power enough to take away his life, yet God might have set his face against him, and have cut him off, in a visible manner, from among his people, as he often did when crimes were not punished in a legal way. This punishment God graciously remitted, when he told him, by Nathan, that he had put away his sin, and that he should not die.<sup>p</sup> And David, when he testifies his repentance in this psalm, would have offered sacrifice; but he finds that none was ordained for the sin he had committed. In other cases, indeed, the church was satisfied, excommunication or some other punishment was prevented, and the offender was taken into favour, by his offering sacrifice. On this account, his offering sacrifice is called making atonement for him. In other respects, however, it was impossible to expiate sin thereby, so as to procure justification in the sight of God. Sacrifices could not expiate it as to what concerns the conscience. Accordingly, it is said, that 'these sacrifices could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.'<sup>q</sup> That guilt of sin which burdens the consciences of men, as having more immediately to do with God, was taken away only by Christ's sacrifice. On this account, the efficacy of that sacrifice far exceeds all the ends and designs of the sacrifices which were offered under the law.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. vii. 11.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. x. 4.

<sup>j</sup> Chap. vii. 13, 14.

<sup>k</sup> Psal. li. 16.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. ix. 12, 14.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. vii. 27.

<sup>o</sup> Heb. ix. 9.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 26.



This farther appears from the fact that these sacrifices were to be repeated, there being a continual remembrance of sin; for the repetition supposes that sin was not hereby wholly expiated in the sight of God. In this respect also, they differ from the sacrifice which Christ offered; for that being effectual to take away sin, was offered but once.<sup>r</sup>

6. The priests under the law were mortal, and therefore the priesthood was successive. But Christ, as he was not from them by a lineal descent, so he had no successor in his priesthood. In this respect the apostle compares him with them, when he says, 'They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.'<sup>s</sup> Again, as the priesthood ceased, in particular persons, by death; so the high priesthood was sometimes taken away from those who were advanced to it, for some instances of mal-administration. Thus the high priesthood, for some time, descended in the line of Eleazar, the elder branch of Aaron's family; and afterwards during the reign of the judges, it was transferred to the younger branch of his family, namely, the descendants from Ithamar, in which line it was when Eli was high priest;<sup>t</sup> and afterwards, when his sons, by their vile behaviour, forfeited their right to the high priesthood, and God threatened that he would take it away from his family,<sup>u</sup> and accordingly did so when Abiathar, in the beginning of Solomon's reign, was thrust from the priesthood, it again descended, in Zadock, to the elder branch of Aaron's family. Again, the priesthood itself was not designed to continue for ever, but only during that dispensation; after which there was to be no altar, priests, or sacrifice. But Christ's priesthood, as it was unalienable, so it could never be forfeited by mal-administration, or descend to any other. Hence, he is said to be a 'Priest for ever,' which seems to be the meaning of that scripture in which his priesthood is considered as different from the Levitical. 'Those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever.'<sup>x</sup> This oath not only signifies the establishing of him in his priesthood, but it secured to him that he should never fall from it.

There are other things in which Christ's priesthood differs from that of the priests under the law. 'They entered into the holy places made with hands, but Christ into heaven itself.'<sup>y</sup> Then it was only the high priest who was to enter into the holy of holies; but under the gospel, as the apostle observes, all believers, in virtue of Christ's sacrifice, are admitted into the holiest of all,—that is, they have access, through faith, into the presence of God, by the blood of Jesus. Under the law, too, there was a certain order of men who were priests, and yet all the people were not so; but under the gospel-dispensation, believers are styled, 'an holy and a royal priesthood,' and the sacrifices they offer up are 'spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'<sup>z</sup>

II. We shall now consider Christ's priesthood, as typified by Melchizedek. It is said, Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings; and he was priest of the most high God, and he blessed him,<sup>a</sup> &c. This is referred to, as tending to set forth Christ's priesthood: 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'<sup>b</sup> The apostle<sup>c</sup> refers to these scriptures, which are

<sup>r</sup> Heb. x. 10, 14.

<sup>s</sup> Heb. vii. 23, 24.

<sup>t</sup> It is very hard to determine the reason of the translation of the high priesthood from Eleazar to Ithamar's family, or the exact time when it took place. The learned Dr. Lightfoot [See his Works, vol. i. p. 51.] gives a very probable account of this, or the best conjecture that, I think, can be made relating to it. He supposes, that Jephthah offered his daughter, not by devoting her to perpetual virginity, but by putting her to death. This was one of the most vile and inhuman actions that we read of in scripture. It was in Jephthah a sin of ignorance, arising from the disadvantage of his education, and the ill example of those from whom he took it, before he was raised up to be a judge. The high priest, however, ought to have restrained him from it, by telling him that it was a sin; but instead of doing so, it is more than probable that he was active in it, or the person by whom the sacrifice was performed. Now this was such an instance of mal-administration, that, for it the high priesthood was taken from that branch of Aaron's family, in which it then was, and transferred to another.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 30. compared with ver. 35. and 1 Kings ii. 35. <sup>x</sup> Heb. vii. 21. <sup>y</sup> Chap. ix. 7. compared with ver. 24. <sup>z</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. <sup>a</sup> Gen. xiv. 18—20. <sup>b</sup> Psal. cx. 4. <sup>c</sup> Heb. vii.

the only places of the Old Testament where this subject is mentioned, and applies them to Christ's priesthood as containing many things which were not typified by the Aaronic priesthood. It may be observed, that when the apostle enters on this subject, he premises this concerning it, that it contained a very great difficulty. 'Of whom, that is, Melchizedek, we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered,'<sup>d</sup> that is, hard to be explained, so as to be fully understood. It will be no strange thing, therefore, if we cannot fully explain it, or if we assert some things concerning it which are only probable. Certainly this observation of the apostle should induce us to treat on this subject with the greatest humility and modesty. [See Note 3 M, page 540.] As to what we have to say concerning it, I hope we shall advance nothing contrary to the analogy of faith, how difficult soever some phrases, used in scripture relating to it, may seem to be. The method in which we shall proceed, shall be—first, to inquire who this Melchizedek was; and, secondly, how we have in him an eminent type of Christ's priesthood, in some things in which it was not shadowed forth by the Aaronic priesthood.

1. We shall inquire who this Melchizedek probably was. Here we pass by the conjecture of some who lived in an early age of Christianity, whom Epiphanius mentions,<sup>e</sup> who supposed that he was the Holy Ghost. This appears to be a very absurd notion, for we never read, in scripture, of the Holy Ghost appearing in the form of a man, or of his performing any of those offices which belong to the Mediator. It is, therefore, as contrary to the tenor of scripture to call him the priest of the most high God, as it is to call the Father so. Yet Melchizedek is thus styled in the scripture we are explaining. I shall add no more, as to this ungrounded opinion; but proceed to consider some which are more commonly acquiesced in.

The Jews generally conclude that he was Shem, the son of Noah, as also do many other ancient and modern writers, who pay a deference to their authority and reasoning.<sup>f</sup> The principal thing which induces them to be of this opinion is, because that it appears, from scripture-chronology, that Shem was living at the time when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings.<sup>g</sup> They add, that Shem, having received the patriarchal benediction from his father, might truly be reckoned the greatest man in the church; and that he might be so reckoned both as a priest and a king, as Melchizedek is described to have been. But there are two very considerable objections against this opinion, which have weight enough in them, if not to overthrow it, at least to make it very doubtful. Shem's father, mother, and descent, together with the beginning of his life, and afterwards the end of it, were well known; the year when he was born, and the time that he lived being particularly mentioned in scripture. Hence, the apostle could not say concerning him, as he does concerning Melchizedek, that 'he was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;' meaning, as most expositors suppose, that he was so because these were not known or mentioned in scripture. Again, it is very plain, from scripture, that Shem's place of abode was not in the land of Canaan. Hence, he could not be said to be king of Salem, that is, as it is understood by the greatest number of expositors, king of Jerusalem. This was the seat of the posterity of Ham, one of Shem's brethren; and accordingly, from Canaan, his son, that land took its name. This evidently appears from what is said in Gen. x. 6—20, where the Jebusite, Amorite, Hivite, and other inhabitants of the land of Canaan, are said to be the

<sup>d</sup> Heb. v. 11.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Epiph. Hær. p. 67. Sect. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Among the latter, is the learned

Dr. Lightfoot. See his Works, vol. i. p. 12, and vol. ii. p. 327.

<sup>g</sup> We have no account of the year when this battle was fought; but it is evident that it was before Isaac was born, and consequently before Abraham had lived 25 years in the land of Canaan. And that Shem was then living, appears from hence, that from the flood to Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, was 427 years, as appears by considering the sum total of the years of the lives of the patriarchs, mentioned in Gen. xi. 10. et seq., and also that Terah was 130 years old when Abraham was born, as appears by comparing Gen. xi. 32. with Acts vii. 4. and Gen. xii. 4. and by considering Abraham as 75 years old, as it is there said he was when he left Haran. Now Shem was born 98 or 100 years before the flood, as appears by comparing Gen. v. 32. with chap. xi. 10. and vii. 11. Therefore, when Abraham went out of his country into the land of Canaan, Shem was 525 or 527 years old; and, when Shem died, he was 600 years old, Gen. xi. 10, 11. Therefore Shem lived more than half a hundred years after this battle was fought.



descendants of Ham. For these reasons, Melchizedek does not appear to have been Shem.

There is one learned writer who conjectures that Melchizedek was Ham.<sup>h</sup> This opinion agrees, indeed, very well with the place of his residence. But there are other things which render it not in the least probable. The same thing may be observed of Ham, as was before of Shem, that he could not be said to be 'without father, without mother, without beginning of years, and end of life.' Besides, he had not received the patriarchal benediction from Noah: his posterity having had a curse entailed upon them, as it is said, 'Cursed be Canaan.'<sup>i</sup> On this account, some question whether Ham might be reckoned a member of the church, much more whether he deserved to be called a priest of the most high God, and King of righteousness. This author,<sup>k</sup> indeed, supposes that Ham was not cursed by Noah, but only Canaan his son, and his posterity; and that, therefore, he might have been an excellent person, and deserved the character given of Melchizedek. But there are very few who will be convinced by this method of reasoning; so that we pass it over, and proceed to consider another opinion.

The greatest part of divines suppose, that it is not only the safest, but most probable way of solving this difficulty, to confess, that it is impossible to determine who Melchizedek was, and that the Holy Ghost has purposely concealed this matter from us, that he might be a more eminent type of Christ. They suppose him, therefore, to have been a certain unknown king and priest, residing in Jerusalem, at the time when Abraham was met by him; and that this ought to put a full stop to all farther inquiries about him. On this account they allege it may well be said concerning him, that he was 'without father, without mother,' &c. that is, that these were not known; for what does not appear to be, is sometimes said, in scripture, not to be.

There is another opinion concerning him, which, though not so commonly received as the first and third above-mentioned, and though probably not unattended with some difficulties, very much deserves our consideration, namely, that Melchizedek was our Lord Jesus Christ himself, assuming, at that time, the form of man, and personating a priest and a king, as he did on several occasions, designing thereby to prefigure his future incarnation.<sup>l</sup> It is argued in defence of this opinion, that when the apostle describes him as king of Salem, he does not intend Jerusalem, or mean, that at that time he resided there. But his words, as he explains them in the immediately following context, imply that he was 'King of peace,' as this word Salem signifies. Accordingly, he is set forth by two of those glorious titles, which are given him elsewhere in scripture. 'He is called King of righteousness;' as it is said concerning him, 'A King shall reign and prosper, who is called, The Lord our righteousness;'<sup>m</sup> and he is called likewise, 'the Prince of peace.'<sup>n</sup> What makes this opinion more probable, is, that it does not appear that Jerusalem was called Salem, which is alleged to be a contraction of the word Jerusalem, till some ages after this; for till David conquered it, it was commonly known by the name of Jebus.<sup>o</sup>—Again, the apostle's description of him as being 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,' is applicable rather to a divine Person than to a mere man. As for the sense which is generally given of these words, namely, that he was 'without father,' &c. because no mention is made thereof in scripture, that is, in those two scriptures in the Old Testament in which he is spoken of; this seems more strained and forced than to understand them according to the proper sense of the words. Indeed, if this description imports nothing else but the silence of scripture on the subject of it, there are many other persons, as Job, Elijah, &c., who have as great a right to the character it describes as Melchizedek. Yet Melchizedek is thus described, as distinguished from all others. We may add, as a corroboration of this argument, that the apostle says that, in respect to his being 'without father,' &c. he was 'made like the Son of God,' that is, as is generally supposed, a type of him. Now, if his being without

<sup>h</sup> See Jurieu's Critical History, vol. i. chap. 11.      <sup>i</sup> Gen. ix. 25.      <sup>k</sup> See Critical History, vol. i. page 110.

<sup>l</sup> This opinion is maintained by Cuneus, [Vid. ejusd. Repub. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 3.] and some others after him.      <sup>m</sup> Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.      <sup>n</sup> Isa. ix. 6.      <sup>o</sup> 1 Chron. xi. 4.

father, mother, descent, &c. in the common acceptation of the words, be inconsistent with his being a type of Christ to the church in Abraham's time, that certainly cannot be the sense of it; for he was, without doubt, a type of Christ's priestly and kingly office to him and to the church in his days, as well as to those who lived in following ages. Now, that he could not be such a type to many who lived in that age, is evident; for they who lived in the place where he was born and died, knew his father, mother, descent, beginning, or end of life; so that he was no type of Christ's eternal priesthood to them. As for Abraham, though he might not know his father, mother, or descent, or the exact time when he was born, and so, in that respect, to him Melchizedek might in part be made like to the Son of God, as signifying that his priestly office was not derived by descent, as the Aaronic priesthood descended from parents to children; yet he could not be a type of the everlasting duration of Christ's priestly office, since he was no more without end of days, in the common sense in which that expression is taken, than Abraham or any other who lived with him, who could not be supposed to know the time or place of their death. And if, according to the common opinion, Melchizedek is said to be without father, mother, descent, &c. because there is no mention of these in scripture, he could not be a type to Abraham or any other before the word of God was committed to writing.—But there is another thing, which may be observed in the apostle's description of him,<sup>p</sup> when he says, that 'he liveth,' and accordingly is opposed to those priests that die, by which he seems to be described as immortal, and so opposed to mortal men. It is not said, that he once lived, and that we have no mention of the time of his death; but 'he liveth.' This some conclude to be an ascription of that divine perfection to him, whereby the Most High is styled 'the living God;' or, as it is said in one of the following verses, 'He ever liveth,'<sup>q</sup> to denote his eternal priesthood; or, as he says elsewhere concerning himself, 'I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.'<sup>r</sup>—What makes this opinion more probable, is the consideration of the place where they who defend the other side of the question suppose he lived, and the people to whom he ministered as a priest; which seem not agreeable to the character given him, as the greatest priest on earth. The inhabitants of Jerusalem at that time were idolaters, or, at least, they had no relation to the church of God which was then seated in Abraham's family. When Abraham sojourned in Gerar, not many miles distant from it, in the south-west border of the land of Canaan, he says he thought surely the fear of God was not in this place; and it can hardly be supposed that Jebus, or Jerusalem, was much better. If the Canaanites had been members of the true church, Abraham would not have lived as a stranger and sojourner amongst them, not desirous to converse with them. Now since Jerusalem, or Salem, was inhabited by those who were not worshippers of the true God, how could Melchizedek be said to be their priest, or a minister in holy things to them? For, though an holy man may be a king over a wicked people, such an one cannot well be said to be a priest to those who desire not to be found in the exercise of God's true worship.—Again, it seems probable that Melchizedek was not a priest, or king, whose usual place of residence was Jerusalem, where he ministered and reigned, inasmuch as we do not read that Abraham, at any other time, conversed with him, or joined with him in worship, though the place where he sojourned was but a few miles distant from it. Now, we can hardly suppose that he would have neglected to do this, or that we should have had no account of any intercourse between these two men, who must be reckoned the greatest and best that lived on earth, besides that mentioned in the scripture we are now considering.—This may be farther argued, from the apostle's saying that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and from his inferring thence that he was superior to him, inasmuch as 'the less is blessed of the better.'<sup>s</sup> There are but two senses in which a person is said to bless another. The one is, by praying for a blessing on him, or as God's messenger signifying that God would bless him; and the other is, by conferring blessedness upon him, or making him blessed. Now, if Melchizedek had blessed Abraham only in the former sense, which he might have done had he been a mere man, the apostle



could not have inferred thence his superiority to Abraham. The lowest of men may, in this sense, bless the greatest, that is, pray for a blessing on them, and God might employ such to declare to others that they are blessed; yet it would not follow that they are, on this account, greater than they. Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and therefore, as the apostle infers, was greater than he. He must, consequently, have blessed him, by making him blessed, or by conferring some of those blessings which he has to bestow as a divine Person, the Fountain of blessedness.

These are the most material arguments which are brought in defence of the opinion that Melchizedek was our blessed Lord. From them it seems probable that our Saviour, on the occasion in question, assumed the form of a Man, as he often did, and appeared to Abraham with the mien and likeness of a King and Priest. Just as he is said elsewhere to have appeared to Joshua, in the form of a warrior, with his sword drawn in his hand, and to have soon discovered to him who he was; so we may suppose, that, at this time, he appeared to Abraham as a King and a Priest, and discovered to him who he was, and the right he had to the spoils which had been gained. We may suppose, too, that he accepted the tithes of those spoils, partly to signify that tithing was to be the way in which the priesthood was to be supported in future ages, but principally to give a type of that divine homage which we owe to him, as the Priest and King of his people. I will not be too tenacious of this side of the question. Yet to me it seems the more probable; especially if what is objected against it does not weaken the force of the arguments brought to support it.

One objection against it is, that the place of Melchizedek's residence is said to be Salem, or Jerusalem, in the land of Canaan, where he was a king and priest. Now, say the objectors, this could not be said of our Lord Jesus Christ; for, as his kingdom was not of this world, so he never resided, or fixed his abode, in any part of it before his incarnation. It is true, they add, he sometimes appeared then in the form of a Man or an Angel, in order that he might occasionally converse with his people; yet he never continued long or dwelt amongst them, till he was made flesh; whereas, Melchizedek seems to be described as an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, dwelling in Salem. Now this objection takes some things for granted which will not readily be allowed by those who entertain the contrary way of thinking, namely, that Salem is the name of a place, and that there he resided. This, they might reply, is rather a character of his person; for, if *Tzedek* be a character of his person, as signifying righteousness, why should it be denied that Salem, from the Hebrew word *Shalom*, is also a glorious character, belonging to his person? This is the more apparent if we consider that the apostle explains both words in this sense, when he says, that by interpretation, they are, 'King of righteousness, and King of peace.'<sup>t</sup> And if this be true, there is no force in the other part of the objection, as to his residing in any particular place before his incarnation.

It is farther objected, that our Saviour is said to be a Priest, 'after the order of Melchizedek,'<sup>u</sup> and that 'after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,'<sup>x</sup> meaning our Saviour; so that he cannot be the same person as Melchizedek. This objection is much more material than any other; and I am apt to think, determines the sentiments of many who adopt the commonly received opinion. But, as it ought to be considered whether the arguments in defence of the other side of the question be conclusive; so it may be replied to this objection, that Christ might be called a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, though he were the person intended by him, inasmuch as, by his appearing in the form of a Priest and a King to Abraham, he afforded a type or figure of what he would really be and do after his incarnation, and also gave a specimen of his priestly and kingly office which he would afterwards execute. This might as well be said to be a type of his priesthood, as any of his appearances in the form of a man were typical of his incarnation. These divines generally call it a prelibation of his incarnation—a term which differs very little from the sense of the word type. As to its being said that 'another Priest ariseth after the similitude of Melchizedek,' though it may be reck-

oned a strong objection against our argument, yet let it be considered, that 'after the similitude of Melchizedek' imports the same thing as 'after the order of Melchizedek;' and so it signifies, that there is a similitude or likeness, between what he then appeared to be, and what he really was after his incarnation. As for his being called 'another priest,' this does not imply that he was a Priest different from Melchizedek, but from the priests under the law; for the apostle, as appears by the context, is comparing Christ's priesthood with the Aaronic. When Christ executed his priestly office after his incarnation, he might well be styled *another* Priest, that is, a Priest not descending from Aaron, but the anti-type of Melchizedek, as prefigured by the remarkable occurrence of his appearing to Abraham. [See Note 3 N, page 540.]

Thus concerning that difficult question, Who Melchizedek was? All that I shall add is, whether it were Christ himself or some other person, it is evident that there was in his character and ministration, a very eminent type of Christ's kingly and priestly office,—especially of his priestly, as containing several things which were not shadowed forth by the Aaronic priesthood. Though the Aaronic priesthood contained a type of Christ's making atonement, by shedding his blood; yet there was nothing in it which typified the glory of his Person, his immortality and sinless perfection, the eternal duration of his priesthood, or his being immediately raised up by God to be the Priest of his people. Nor was there in the Aaronic priesthood a type of the kingly and priestly office of Christ, as belonging to the same Person; since the priests under the law were not kings, nor the kings priests. Moreover, Melchizedek's being represented as 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,' plainly signifies, that the execution of his priestly office depended immediately on God, who raised him up as an extraordinary Person for this end, as well as that he remains a Priest for ever. Hence, if we take both types together, we have a very plain and clear representation of Christ's priestly office. [See Note 3 O, page 543.]

### *The Necessity of Satisfaction for Sin.*

We shall now consider the necessity of Christ's executing that part of his priestly office which consists in his making satisfaction to divine justice. [See Note 3 P, page 545.] This is generally denied by those who oppose his divinity; particularly the Socinians, who maintain that God pardons sin without satisfaction. Others, who do not altogether deny the satisfaction of Christ, suppose that God might have pardoned sin without it,—that, however, it was more expedient to make a demand of it than not, inasmuch as his honour, as the Governor of the world, is secured thereby,—that, therefore, his demanding satisfaction is the result of his will,—and that, accordingly, he might have required and accepted of a satisfaction less valuable than what was given him by our Saviour. This opinion is equally to be opposed with the former, as derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections.

Now, when we assert the necessity of satisfaction, we mean, that God could not, in consistency with his holiness and justice, pardon sin without it; and that no satisfaction, short of that which Christ gave, is sufficient to answer the designed end, or worthy to be accepted by God, as a price of redemption. When we assert that satisfaction was necessary, moreover, we would be understood as intending the necessity of it in the same sense as that of forgiveness of sin, or of salvation; the necessity being conditional, or founded on the supposition that God designed to save sinners. This he might have refused to have done; and then there would have been no room for satisfaction to be given to his justice. But as God designed to be reconciled to his people, and to bring them to glory, we cannot but assert the necessity of satisfaction in order to the accomplishment of these ends. We shall now offer some proofs of this.

1. The necessity of satisfaction appears from the holiness of God. Inasmuch as he is infinitely perfect, he cannot but will and love that which is most agreeable to his nature, and which contains the brightest display of his image, which consists in righteousness and true holiness. Accordingly, it is said, 'The righteous Lord lov-



eth righteousness.'<sup>y</sup> From this it follows that he cannot but hate, and have an infinite aversion to, whatever is contrary to righteousness and true holiness. If his love of holiness be founded in the perfection of his nature, then his hatred of sin, which is opposite to it, must also be founded in that perfection. Accordingly, it is said, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity';<sup>z</sup> and elsewhere, 'Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.'<sup>a</sup> Now, God's hating sin consists in his infinite opposition to it, and so it is natural to him; or in his will, to punish it; and, consequent on this, in his actual punishing of it. If the first of these be necessary, the others must be so likewise; or, if he be a holy God, he cannot but determine to punish sin, and afterwards to put his determination in execution. Moreover, he is obliged to manifest his hatred of sin; otherwise he could not be glorified by his creatures, as an holy God. He cannot have the glory of any attribute ascribed to him, unless there be a visible display of it. Hence, he is obliged to demonstrate his hatred of sin, by punishing it. And, since this obligation arises from a necessity of nature, and not merely from an act of his will, it follows that he is obliged to punish all sin, even that which he designs to pardon. But this could not have been done without a demand of satisfaction to be given, by a surety, in the sinner's behalf; which plainly evinces the necessity of satisfaction.

2. This farther appears, from the punishment threatened by the law of God. This also is necessary. For understanding that it is so, let it be considered that God cannot but give a law to intelligent creatures, who, as such, are the subjects of moral government, and therefore under a natural obligation to yield obedience to him. But this they could not do, if the law were not given and promulgated.—Again, it was necessary for God to annex a threatening to his law; so that punishment would be due to those who violate it. By means of this threatening, obedience would be enforced; and that fear which is excited by it, would be an additional motive to obey. For without such a threatening, the sinner would be ready to conclude, that he might go on in his rebellion against God with impunity.—Moreover, if the law be violated, as it is by sin, the truth of God, as the result of the threatening annexed to it, obliges him to punish the violation of it, either in our own persons, or in the person of our surety; that so the honour of his law might be secured, which he is obliged to vindicate, as it contains a bright display of the glory of his perfections.

3. If God could, consistently with his own perfections, pardon sin without satisfaction, he would not have sent his well-beloved Son to suffer for it. This plainly appears from his wisdom and goodness. It is not consistent with the glory of his wisdom for him to bring about a thing with so much difficulty, and with such displays of his vindictive justice, in punishing one who never offended him, if he could have answered the great end designed on easier terms, or have brought about the work of our salvation without it. Nor does it consist with his goodness to inflict punishment, where it is not absolutely necessary; for, agreeably to this perfection, he delights rather to extend compassion than to display his vindictive justice, if it might be avoided. Accordingly, he is described in scripture, speaking after the manner of men, as punishing sin with a kind of regret, or reluctance.<sup>b</sup> Inflicting punishment is called 'his strange work.'<sup>c</sup> It is said also, that 'he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men';<sup>d</sup> but, on the other hand, 'delighteth in mercy.'<sup>e</sup> Hence, if he could, consistently with his perfections, have pardoned sin without satisfaction, he would not have commanded the sword of his vindictive justice to 'awake against the man that is his fellow,'<sup>f</sup> as an expedient to bring about an end which might have been attained without it. Moreover, if God could have pardoned sin without satisfaction, then his giving his own Son to perform it for us, would not have been such a wonderful instance of divine grace, as it is represented to be in scripture; for it would not have been the only expedient to bring about our salvation, if satisfaction were not absolutely necessary for this end.

y Psal. xi. 7.  
c Isa. xxviii. 21.

z Hab. i. 13. .  
d Lam. iii. 33.

a Psal. v. 5.  
e Micah vii. 18.

b Hosea xi. 8.  
f Zech. xiii. 7.

*The Nature of the Satisfaction Required.*

We are now to consider what kind of satisfaction God demanded for the expiating of sin. There are many who do not pretend, in all respects, to deny the necessity of satisfaction; but, when they explain what they mean by it, their opinion amounts to little more than a denial of it. Thus the heathen, who had learned by tradition that sacrifices were to be offered to make atonement for sin, concluded that these were sufficient to satisfy for it, and thereby to deliver from its guilt. Some of the Jews, also, in a degenerate age of the church, seemed to have nothing else in view, and to have no regard to the spiritual meaning of the sacrifices, or their reference as types to Christ's satisfaction; for they rested in these sacrifices, supposing that the multitude of them was sufficient to satisfy for those vile abominations of which they were guilty. On this account, God expresses the greatest dislike of their sacrifices when he says, 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.'<sup>s</sup> Elsewhere he tells them, 'I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices.'<sup>h</sup> He does not mean that these were not instituted by him; but it is as if he had said, 'I did not hereby intend that they should be reckoned a sufficient price to satisfy my justice for sin.' To guard against the supposition that their sacrifices could serve this purpose, the apostle says, 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins;'<sup>i</sup> for they were far from being a sufficient price to satisfy God. Moreover, the Papists speak much of human satisfactions, consisting in various penances, fastings, leading a mortified life, parting with their estates, and submitting to voluntary poverty, with a design to make atonement for sin. The main foundation of this opinion, is their supposing, that whatever satisfaction God demands for sin is the result of his will, and that therefore he might accept of the smallest act of obedience and suffering as sufficient to compensate for it, because he has deemed it so. They, accordingly, distinguish between giving satisfaction to God, and to his justice. God, say they, may accept of, or be satisfied with, the smallest price, instead of that which is most valuable; whereas, nothing can, properly speaking, be said to satisfy justice, but that which has in it a value in proportion to what is purchased by it. As to the former branch of this distinction, we deny that God can accept any thing as a price of redemption, but what has a tendency to secure the glory of his perfections; and we assert that nothing less than an infinite price can do this, and that, therefore, the distinction is vain, and nothing to their purpose. Or, if they suppose that God can be satisfied with what justice does not conclude sufficient, then their supposition is blasphemous, and derogatory to the divine perfections. We can allow of no satisfaction, but what tends to set forth the glory and fulfil the demands of divine justice. Accordingly, we are to consider, that the satisfaction which was demanded by the justice of God, for the expiation of sin, must contain two things.

1. It must be of infinite value, otherwise it would not be sufficient to compensate for the injuries offered to the divine name by sin. Sin is objectively infinite, and deserves a punishment proportioned to it; and hence, the price demanded to satisfy for it must be of corresponding value. The justice of God would cast the utmost contempt on any thing that falls short of this. The prophet represents a person as making a very large overture, which one would think sufficient if a finite price were so, when he speaks, in a beautiful climax or gradation, of coming before the Lord 'with burnt-offerings,' and these well-chosen, 'calves of a year old,' and a multitude of them. 'Will the Lord,' says he, 'be pleased with thousands of rams,' a price which very few were able to give, 'or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?' Here he offers more than it was possible to give. Then he ascends higher, and, if it were sufficient, would part with 'his first-born for his transgression, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.' All these are reckoned an inconsiderable



price, not sufficient to procure the thing designed. Hence, he who offers it, is advised, instead of pretending to satisfy divine justice by a finite price, 'to walk humbly with his God,'<sup>k</sup> and, whatever obedience he is obliged to perform, not to have the vanity to think that it is a sufficient price to answer that end.

2. Satisfaction must bear some similitude or resemblance, as to the matter of it, to that debt which was due from those for whom it was to be given. Here we must consider what was the debt due from us, for which a demand of satisfaction was made. This was twofold. There was first a debt of perfect and sinless obedience, whereby the glory of God's sovereignty might be secured, and the honour of his law maintained. This debt it was morally impossible for man to pay after his fall; for it implies a contradiction to say that a fallen creature can yield sinless obedience. Yet it was demanded of us, though fallen; for the obligation could not be disannulled by our disability to perform it. There was next a debt of punishment, which we were liable to, in proportion to the demerit of sin, as the result of the condemning sentence of the law, which threatened death for every transgression and disobedience. Now, if satisfaction be made to the justice of God, it must have these ingredients in it.

As to the infinite value of the price which was given, it is contested by none but those who deny the divinity of Christ. The arguments which we have brought in defence of our Lord's true deity, and others by which we have proved the necessity that our Mediator should be God, render it less needful for us, at present, to enlarge on this subject.<sup>1</sup> But there are many, who do not deny the necessity of an infinite satisfaction, who will not allow that it is necessary that there should be a resemblance between the debt contracted and satisfaction given.

By these, it is objected, that the least act of obedience, or one drop of Christ's blood, was a sufficient price to satisfy divine justice. In defence of this opinion they argue, that these must be supposed to have had an infinite value; that nothing can be greater than what is infinite; and that, therefore, one act of obedience was sufficient to redeem the whole world of fallen men, or the whole number of fallen angels, if God had pleased to order it so. Now, we do not deny that the least act of obedience, or sufferings performed by our Saviour, would have been of infinite value, inasmuch as we do not conclude the infinity of obedience to consist in a multitude of acts, or in its being perfectly sinless. We do not deem his sufferings infinite, merely because they were exquisite, or greater than what mankind are generally liable to in this world, but because they were the obedience and sufferings of a divine Person; and according to the same method of reasoning, we admit that the least act of obedience and suffering, performed by him, would have been infinite. It does not follow, however, that this would have been a sufficient price of redemption; for the sufficiency of the price arises, not only from the infinite value of it, but from God's will to accept it; and he could not be willing to accept any price, but what had a tendency to illustrate and set forth the glory of his holiness as a sin-hating God,—of his sovereignty in the government of the world, in such a way, that the most fit means might be used to prevent the commission of sin,—and of his truth, in fulfilling the threatenings denounced, to which man was exposed by violating the law. Now, these ends could not be answered by one single instance of obedience or suffering; and therefore God could not deem them sufficient. It is plain, too, that he did not deem them sufficient; for, if he had, he would not have delivered our Saviour to suffer all that he did, concerning whom it is said, 'he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.'<sup>m</sup> Moreover, it was necessary that redemption should be brought about in such a way as would lay the sinner under the highest obligation to admire the love, both of the Father and the Son. Now, if Christ had performed only one act of obedience, or suffered in only the least degree, such an instance of condescension, though infinite, would not have had so great a tendency to answer this end; nor could it have been said, as it is, with a great emphasis of expression, that 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'<sup>n</sup>

It is objected, by others, that Christ's active obedience was no part of the satis-

faction which he gave for us, inasmuch as this was a debt due from him for himself, his human nature, in which alone he could yield obedience, being under a natural obligation to perform it; so that he could not be said to pay that debt for us, which was due for himself. As for his passive obedience, say the objectors, that, indeed, might be performed for us; because, being an innocent Person, he was not under any obligation to suffer, except by his own consent. But this, they contend, cannot be said of his active obedience. And they add, that, if he had performed active obedience for us, it would have exempted us from an obligation to yield obedience ourselves; and, consequently, this doctrine leads to licentiousness.—Now, we allow that Christ, as Man, was obliged to perform obedience, as a debt due from him as a creature, and that, therefore, now he is in heaven, he is under the same obligation; though this has no reference to the work of our redemption, which was finished before he went thither. We contend, however, that the obedience he performed before his death, might be deemed a part of that satisfaction which he gave to the justice of God for us. His being under the law, was the result of his own voluntary consent; inasmuch as his incarnation, which was necessary to his becoming a subject, was the result of the consent of his divine will. Now, if he came into the world, and thereby put himself into a capacity of yielding obedience by his own consent, which no other person ever did, then his obedience, which was the consequence of his doing so, might be said to be voluntary, and so deemed a part of the satisfaction which he gave to the justice of God in our behalf.—Again, though we do not deny that Christ's active obedience was a debt due to God for himself, yet it does not follow that it may not be imputed to us, nor accepted for us; even as that perfect obedience which was to have been performed by Adam, according to the tenor of the first covenant, though it were to have been imputed to all his posterity, was, nevertheless, primarily due from him for himself.—As to that part of the objection in which it is supposed that Christ's obedience for us would exempt us from an obligation to yield obedience, it is generally brought by those who desire to render the doctrine we are maintaining odious, and take no notice of what we say in explaining our sense of it. In answer to it, let it be considered, that, when we say Christ obeyed for us, we do not suppose that he designed by his obedience to exempt us from any obligation to yield obedience to God's commanding will, but only to exempt us from performing it with the same view that he did. We are, by his having obeyed for us, excused, not from yielding obedience to God as a Sovereign, but from doing it with a view of meriting thereby, or making atonement for our defect of obedience, which was the result of our fallen state. Hence, we are to say, 'When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do,' without considering it as that righteousness by which we are to be justified in the sight of God. We understand our obligation to yield active obedience, in the same sense as we are obliged patiently to suffer whatever afflictions God is pleased to lay on us, from which we are not exempted by Christ's sufferings. The only difference between them is, that his sufferings are penal and satisfactory. He suffered for us, that, by his doing so, he might purchase for us eternal life, which is not the end of a believer's suffering. Why, then, may it not be allowed, that Christ might perform obedience for us, and we, at the same time, not be excused from it?

As to the sufferings of Christ, it is objected, by others, that the whole of his passive obedience was not demanded as a price of redemption for us, but only what he endured upon the cross, which was the greatest and most formidable part of his sufferings, and particularly those which he endured from the sixth to the ninth hour, while there was darkness over all the land, in which his soul was afflicted in so extraordinary a manner, that he cried,<sup>p</sup> 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'<sup>q</sup> As for his other sufferings, endured in the whole course of his life, the objectors allow that these were a convincing evidence of his love to us, and were designed as an example, to induce us to bear afflictions with patience. But they maintain that it was only his sufferings upon the cross which were satisfactory, and

<sup>o</sup> Luke xvii. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xxvii. 45, 46.

<sup>q</sup> These, which are styled, *Passiones trihorii, ultimi*, are generally called, *Pænæ satisfactoriæ*; and all his sufferings before them, *Pænæ convincentes*.



that the cross was the altar on which he offered himself for us; and they adduce in support of their opinion those scriptures which speak of our redemption and justification, as the effect of his crucifixion and death, rather than of his sufferings in life. Now, though redemption and salvation are attributed, in many scriptures, to Christ's death, or to his shedding his blood upon the cross for us; yet there is, in all of them, a figurative way of speaking, in which, by a synecdoche, a part is taken for the whole; so that his sufferings in life, though not particularly mentioned in them, are not excluded. There is one scripture, in which, by the same figurative way of speaking, our justification is ascribed to Christ's active obedience: 'By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.'<sup>r</sup> Here, though his passive obedience is not mentioned, it is not excluded. So, when we read of Christ's sufferings on the cross as being a part of his satisfaction, we are not to suppose that his sufferings in life are excluded. The apostle plainly intimates as much, when he says, 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'<sup>s</sup> He humbled himself, not only in his death, but in all the sufferings he endured, in the whole course of his life. We must conclude, therefore, that what he endured in his infancy, and the poverty, temptation, reproach, and contradiction of sinners against himself, and all the other miseries which he underwent during the whole course of his life, which were a part of the curse due to us for sin, were submitted to by him to expiate it, and consequently were a part of his satisfaction. As for the cross being styled, as it is, by some ancient and modern writers, the altar on which Christ offered himself, we think the notion little more than a strain of rhetoric. Or, if it be designed to illustrate the opinion we are now opposing, we deny that the cross ought to be called the altar. It is nowhere so styled in scripture, nor have we ground to conclude, that the altar on which the sacrifices under the law were offered, was a type of Christ's cross in particular. Indeed, we have a better explanation of the spiritual meaning of it, given by Christ himself, when he speaks of the altar, as 'sanctifying the gift';<sup>t</sup> alluding to its being said concerning it that it is 'most holy, and whatsoever toucheth it shall be holy.'<sup>u</sup> From this it is inferred, that the altar was more holy than the gift which was laid upon it; and it signifies that the altar on which Christ was offered added an excellency to his offering. Now, nothing could be said to do so, but his divine nature being personally united to his human, which rendered his sacrifice infinitely valuable. This is, therefore, the altar on which Christ was offered; or, at least, this is that which sanctified the offering, and not the cross on which he suffered.\* [See Note 3 Q, p. 546.]

### *The Reality of the Atonement.*

We shall now prove, that what Christ did and suffered, was with a design to give satisfaction to the justice of God, and that what he offered was a true and proper sacrifice for sin. All allow that Christ obeyed and suffered. Even the Socinians themselves will not deny that Christ suffered, for us; for this is very plainly stated in scripture. But the main stress of the controversy lies in this,—Whether Christ died merely for our good, that is, that we might be induced to believe the truth of the doctrines he delivered, as he confirmed them by shedding his blood, and that he might give us an example of patience and holy fortitude under the various evils we are exposed to, either in life or death? This is the sense in which they understand Christ's dying for us. But there is a great deal more intended by his dying for us: it is intended by it that he died in our room and stead, or that he bore that for us which the justice of God demanded, as a debt primarily due from us, and that he did so as an expedient for taking away the guilt of sin, and delivering us from his wrath to which we were liable.

This will appear, if we consider that he is for this reason styled our Redeemer,

<sup>r</sup> Rom. v. 19.

<sup>s</sup> Phil. ii. 8.

<sup>t</sup> Matt. xxiii. 19.

<sup>u</sup> Exod. xxix. 37.

<sup>x</sup> It is an abominable strain of blasphemy, which some popish writers make use of, when they say not only that the cross was the altar, but that it was sacred, and had a virtue to sanctify the gift offered thereon, which is the foundation of that idolatrous adoration they give to it.

as having purchased us by his death, or delivered us, in a judicial way, out of the hand of vindictive justice. This is the most proper, if not the only sense of the word redemption. [See Note 3 R, page 547.] The Socinians, indeed, speak of Christ as a Redeemer; but they understand the word in a metaphorical sense, as importing his delivering us from some evils to which we were exposed, not by paying a price of redemption for us, but by revealing those laws or doctrines which had a tendency to reform the world, or laying down some rules to direct the conversation of mankind, and remove some prejudices they had entertained. Now we assert, that, as our Redeemer, he dealt with the justice of God; as offering himself a sacrifice for sin. This appears from those scriptures which speak of his 'soul,' as 'made an offering for sin,'<sup>y</sup> or of his being 'set forth to be a propitiation, to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins.'<sup>z</sup> In this respect, he answered the types under the law, in which atonement is said to have been made by sacrifice; which, being an act of worship, was performed to God alone. By such sacrifices sin was typically expiated, and the sinner discharged from the guilt to which he was liable. Accordingly, Christ is said, as the antitype of them, to have 'offered himself without spot to God,' when he shed his blood for us, or to have 'put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,'<sup>a</sup> and to have 'given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.' Moreover, what he did and suffered is styled 'a ransom,' or price of redemption; and they who were concerned in it are said to be 'bought with a price.'<sup>b</sup> He says, concerning himself, that 'he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'<sup>c</sup> We read, in scripture, of a person's paying a sum of money as 'a ransom for his life,' when it was forfeited by his having been the culpable occasion of the death of another;<sup>d</sup> and if such a consideration, when exacted as a price of redemption, be styled a ransom, a person's laying down his life for another, may, with equal propriety, be so called. Now, Christ is said, in many scriptures, to have done this for us; and on this account, he is styled our Redeemer.

It is objected, that we often read in scripture of redemption, when there was no price paid. Thus Israel is said to have been 'redeemed out of Egypt,'<sup>e</sup> and Babylon;<sup>f</sup> and elsewhere, speaking of their deliverance out of captivity, God says, 'I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible';<sup>g</sup> yet there was no price of redemption paid for their deliverance out of either Egypt or Babylon, but it was by the immediate power of God. So Jacob, when he speaks of his deliverance from evil by the angel, styles it, his 'redemption from all evil.'<sup>h</sup> Now, say the objectors, though we allow that the Angel he there speaks of, was our Lord Jesus Christ; yet the deliverance he wrought for Jacob was not by paying a price for him, but by exerting his divine power. The objectors add that others are called redeemers, who have been God's ministers in delivering his people. Thus Moses is called 'a ruler and deliverer, by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush';<sup>i</sup> where, they say, the word translated 'deliverer,'<sup>k</sup> ought to be rendered 'a redeemer.' On these various grounds, they conclude that there may be redemption without satisfaction.—But this objection, how plausible soever it may seem to be, is not unanswerable. The reply which may be given to it is, that though deliverance from evil may be styled redemption, as it often is in scripture, the reason of its being so called, is the reference which it has to that ransom which Christ was, after his incarnation, to pay for his people. This was the foundation of all that discriminating grace which God, in former ages, extended to his people. It was on account of this that he did not suffer them to perish in Egypt, or Babylon. Accordingly, their deliverance thence is called a redemption. We never find, however, that any deliverance which God wrought for his enemies who have no concern in Christ's redemption, is so called. As to Moses being styled, in the scripture referred to, 'a redeemer,' the deliverance he wrought for the Israelites, as an instrument made use of by the Angel that appeared to him, may, without any impropriety of expression, be called a redemption, and he a redeemer; inas-

y Isa. liii. 10.

c Matt. xx. 28.

g Jer. xv. 21.

z Rom. iii. 25.

d Exod. xxi. 29, 30.

h Gen. xlviii. 16.

a Heb. ix. 26.

e Deut. vii. 8.

i Acts vii. 35.

b 1 Cor. vi. 20.

f Micah iv. 10.

k *λυτρωτής*.



much as that deliverance which Christ wrought by him, was founded on the purchase which he designed to pay, otherwise Moses would not have been so styled.

2. There are many scriptures which speak of Christ's obedience and sufferings having been in our room and stead, whereby he performed what was due from us to the justice of God, which is the proper notion of satisfaction. Thus we are to understand those expressions in which he is said to 'die for us.' 'In due time,' says the apostle, 'Christ died for the ungodly;' and 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'<sup>1</sup> By these expressions, we are to understand that he endured those sufferings in life and death to which we were liable,—that he did so with a design to procure for us justification, reconciliation to God, and eternal salvation,—and that herein he was substituted in our room and stead, as well as died for our good.<sup>m</sup>—That Christ died in this sense, for his people, farther appears from his being said in scripture, to bear their sins. 'Who his own self,' says the apostle, 'bare our sins in his own body on the tree.'<sup>n</sup> And elsewhere it is said, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.'<sup>o</sup> All these expressions plainly denote that he suffered that which was due to them, or that he died in their room and stead. Again, he is said to have died for them in a sense in which none but he ever died for another. Much more, therefore, must be understood by his death than his dying for the good of mankind. The apostle, speaking of this matter, opposes Christ's sufferings to his own, with respect to their end and design. He says, 'Was Paul crucified for you?'<sup>p</sup> which is as if he had said, 'It is true, I have suffered many things for the church's advantage; yet it would be a vile thing for you to entertain even the least surmise that my sufferings were endured with the same view that Christ suffered; for he died as a sacrifice for sin, that he might give a price of redemption to the justice of God, which no one else ever did.'

It is objected to what has been said in proof of Christ's dying in our room and stead, from his having borne our iniquities, that the expressions which say that he did so, denote nothing else but his taking our iniquities away, which he might do, if he had not died in our room and stead. Thus, say the objectors, we have, in reference to the scripture which speaks of Christ's bearing our iniquities, an explanation which shows that nothing is intended by it but his taking away some afflictions to which we were liable; for, on occasion of his 'casting out devils, and healing all that were sick,' it is said that he did this, 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,'<sup>q</sup> which he might be said to do, without his dying to satisfy the justice of God for us in our room and stead. We reply, that there are two things to be

1 Rom. v. 6, 8.

m There are several prepositions used in the New Testament in explaining this doctrine, namely, *δια*, *πρι*, *υπι*, and *αντι*. *Δια* and *πρι* refer to the occasion and cause of Christ's death, namely, our sins. Thus it is said, in Rom. iv. 25, 'Who was delivered for our offences, *ὅς περὶ ἡμῶν, δια τα παραπτώματα ἡμῶν*;' and, in 1 Pet. iii. 18, 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *πρι ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν*. And, in this case, his substitution in our room and stead is principally argued, from its being for our sins, for which death was due. As for *υπι*, whenever it refers to Christ's sufferings, it plainly signifies his being substituted in our room and stead; as in Rom. v. 6, 'Christ died, *υπι ἡμῶν*,' 'for the ungodly;' and in Tit. ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, *ὅς ἰδωκεν ἑαυτον υπι ἡμῶν*. This preposition is not only used in the New Testament to signify the substitution of the person dying in the room of another, or, in other instances, acting in his stead, as in 2 Cor. v. 20; Philem. ver. 13; but it is taken in the same sense when used in other writers, Vid. Euripid. in Alcest. μη θνησὺς υπι τοῦ δ' ἀνδρός, and Demosth. in Coron. ἐγὼ τοῦδ' υπι σου ποιῶ. The Latin word which answers to it, is sometimes used in the same sense. Vid. Ter. in Andr. 'Ego pro te molam.' As for the preposition *αντι*, it is seldom or never used, but it signifies a substitution of one thing, or person, in the room of another. Thus when Christ is said to 'give his life a ransom,' *αντι πολλων*, 'for many,' in Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45, this plainly imports his being substituted in their room, as appears by the frequent use of the preposition in other scriptures. See Matt. ii. 22; chap. v. 38; and xvii. 27; Luke xi. 11; and several other places. Vid. Grot. de Satisfact. Christ. cap. 9.

n 1 Pet. ii. 24.

o Isa. liii. 5—8.

p 1 Cor. i. 13.

q Matt. viii. 16, 17

considered in the death of Christ; which, though distinct, are not to be separated. One is, his bearing those griefs, sorrows, or punishments which were due to us for sin; the other is, his taking them away, as the effect and consequence of his having borne them or answered for them. Now, the design of the prophet Isaiah, in his fifty-third chapter, as appears by several expressions in it, is to show that Christ did both these. Accordingly, when he is said to have 'borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,'<sup>r</sup> both these senses are to be applied to the words. Peter explains one of the senses when he says, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree ;'<sup>s</sup> and the evangelist, in the text under consideration, explains the words of the prophet in both senses, when he says, 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,' that is, he submitted to give satisfaction for them, and, as the consequence of this, healed those diseases to which we were liable, as the fruit of sin. The objection, therefore, taken from this scripture against the doctrine we are maintaining, is of no force; for though Christ took away those miseries which were the effects and consequences of sin, it does not follow that he did not do this by making satisfaction for it.

It is further objected that there are texts which speak of Christ's dying for us, where, though this mode of speaking is used, different ends are said to be attained by his dying for us from that of his giving satisfaction to the justice of God. Thus it is said that 'he gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,'<sup>t</sup> 'that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,'<sup>u</sup> and that he might 'leave us an example that we should follow his steps.'<sup>x</sup> It is also said, in order that he might acquire to himself some additional circumstances of glory, that 'he died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.'<sup>y</sup> These and similar ends are said to be attained by Christ's death; and, it is alleged, they do not argue that he died in our stead, but only for our advantage. The objectors add, that others are represented as suffering for the church, as well as Christ, that is, for their good; and that there is no difference in the mode of speaking respecting them, from that in which Christ is said to die for us. Thus the apostle says, 'I rejoice in my sufferings for you ;'<sup>z</sup> and this he explains elsewhere, when he speaks of his being 'afflicted,' for the church's 'consolation and salvation.'<sup>a</sup> Now, we do not deny that there are other ends designed by Christ's sufferings and death, besides his giving satisfaction to divine justice. But these are the result and consequence of the latter. Hence, we must first consider him as dying in our stead, and then consider the fruits and effects which redound to our advantage. The one is so far from being inconsistent with the other, that it is necessary to it. In some of the scriptures just mentioned both of the ends are expressed, the former being the ground and reason of the latter. When, for example, it is said, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,' the meaning is, he first made satisfaction for sin, and then, as the consequence of this, in the application of redemption, he designed to deliver us from the evils we are exposed to in this world. When, again, the apostle speaks of 'Christ's purifying to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' he does not mention this as the chief, much less as the only design of his giving himself for his people; but he states that the design was, first, 'that he might redeem them from all iniquity,' namely, by giving a satisfaction to justice for them, and then that, having redeemed, he might purify them to himself. When, farther, it is said, 'He died, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living,' the meaning is, that he might purchase that dominion which he hath over them as Mediator, or that, having satisfied divine justice for them as a Priest, he might have dominion over them as a King. These two ends, then, are not inconsistent with each other; and therefore the latter does not destroy the former. As for the scripture in which the apostle speaks of his sufferings for the church, or for their 'consolation and salvation,' we may observe that he does not say that he suffered for them, much less in their room and stead, or as a propitiation to make reconciliation, that he might promote their con-

<sup>r</sup> Isa. liii. 4.

<sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 21.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.

<sup>y</sup> Rom. xiv. 9.

<sup>t</sup> Gal. i. 4.

<sup>z</sup> Col. i. 24.

<sup>u</sup> Tit. ii. 14.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. i. 6.



solation and salvation, as Christ did. Still less is it said of any besides the Redeemer, that 'he gave his life a ransom for them.' This is an expression peculiar to himself, wherein his death is represented as a price of redemption for them.<sup>b</sup>

3. That Christ died in our room and stead, and consequently designed by his death to give satisfaction to the justice of God for our sin, appears from the fact that his death was typified by the sacrifices under the ceremonial law. These, it is plain, were substituted in the room of the offender for whom they were offered. We read of 'the priest's laying his hands on the head of the sacrifice, and confessing over it the iniquities' of those for whom it was offered. On this account, it is said to 'have borne them';<sup>c</sup> and the consequence was the discharge of the offenders from the guilt which they had contracted. This is called, making atonement for sin. Now, that this was a type of Christ's making satisfaction for our sins by his death, is evident from the fact that the apostle, having spoken concerning this ceremonial ordinance, applies it to him. He says, 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many';<sup>d</sup> and elsewhere, when referring to 'the sacrifice of the Lord's passover,' as the paschal lamb was styled,<sup>e</sup> he says, 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.'<sup>f</sup> As such, Christ is said 'to be made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'<sup>g</sup> And as they who were ordained to perform the service of making atonement are called priests, Christ, as typified by them, is so styled.

I am sensible it will be objected, that the sacrifices under the ceremonial law were not instituted with a design to typify Christ's death. This would hardly have been asserted by any, it being so contrary to the sense of many scriptures, had it not been thought necessary to support the cause which the objectors maintain. Having said something concerning it before, when considering the origin of the ceremonial law,<sup>h</sup> I shall add only, that it is very absurd to suppose that God appointed sacrifices, not as types of Christ, but to prevent the Israelites from following the custom of the heathen, in sacrificing to their gods; that the heathen did not take their rites of sacrificing from the Jews, but the Jews from them; and that God, foreseeing that the Jews would be inclined to follow the heathens' example in this matter, indulged them in regard to it, and only made a change with respect to its object, in ordaining that, instead of offering sacrifice to idols, they should offer it to himself. This theory runs counter to all the methods of providence in the government of the church; which have been so far from giving occasion to it to symbolize with the religion of the heathen, in their external rites of worship, that God strictly forbade all commerce with them. Thus Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, an idolatrous country, to live in the land of Canaan; and there he was to be no other than a stranger, or sojourner, that he might not, by too great familiarity with the inhabitants, learn their ways. Afterwards, the Jews were prohibited from having any dealings with the Egyptians; not because civil commerce was unlawful, but lest intercourse with them should give occasion to the Jews to imitate them in their rites of worship. To prevent this intercourse, the multiplying of horses was forbidden.<sup>i</sup> On this account, the church says, 'We will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods';<sup>k</sup> that is, we will not do any thing which may be a temptation to us to join with the Egyptians, or other heathen nations, in their idolatry. Certainly, therefore, God did not ordain sacrifices in compliance with the heathen, but to typify Christ's death.

We have thus endeavoured to prove that Christ gave satisfaction to the justice of God for sin, as he was a true and proper sacrifice for it. I might, for the farther strengthening of the argument, have proved, as respects the end of Christ's death assigned by the Socinians, namely, that he might confirm his doctrine, not that he might make atonement for sin, that death can hardly be reckoned an expedient to confirm any doctrine. There are many instances of persons having laid

b See the note on p. 551.

e Exod. xii. 27.

f 1 Cor. v. 7.

c Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

d Heb. ix. 28.

g 2 Cor. v. 21.

h See Sert. 'The

Administration of the Covenant under the Old Testament,' under Quest. xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

i Deut. xvii. 16.

k Hos. xiv. 3.

down their lives to confirm doctrines which were false. Nothing more is proved by a person's dying for a doctrine than that he himself believes it, or else is under the power of delusion or distraction. But a person's believing the doctrine he advances, is no evidence of its truth. Besides, our Saviour's doctrines were sufficiently confirmed by the miracles which he wrought for that end. Indeed, were this the only end of Christ's dying, I cannot see how it differs from the death of the apostles, and other martyrs for the sake of the gospel. Christ laid down his life, however, with other views, and for higher ends, than those for which any other person ever suffered. We may add, that if Christ died only to confirm his doctrine, or, as is farther alleged by those whom we oppose, that he might give us an example of submission to the divine will and patience in suffering, it would have been no manner of advantage to the Old Testament saints. Christ could not be an example to them; nor were the doctrines which it is pretended he suffered to confirm, such as were promulged in their time. On this supposition, therefore, Christ was no Saviour to them; nor could they reap any advantage by what he was to do and suffer; nor would they have been represented as desiring and hoping for his coming, or, as is said of Abraham, 'rejoicing to see his day;'<sup>1</sup> and if we suppose that they were saved, it must have been without faith in him. They who adopt this method of reasoning, not only militate against Christ being a proper sacrifice, but render his cross of none effect, at least to those who lived before his incarnation. They also exhibit his death, which was the greatest instance of love that could be expressed to the children of men, as not absolutely necessary to their salvation.

Before we close this Head, we shall consider an objection generally brought against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, namely, that he did not undergo the punishment due for our sins, because he did not suffer eternally, and because his sufferings were not attended with the despair and some other circumstances of punishment to which sinners are liable in the other world. We answer, that the infinite value of Christ's sufferings did compensate for their not being eternal. Indeed, the eternity of sufferings is the result of their not being satisfactory; a consideration which cannot be applicable to those which Christ endured. As for despair, attended with impatience, and other sins committed by those that suffer eternal punishments, the former arise from the eternal duration of the punishments, the latter from corruption of nature, which, while complaining of the severity of his dispensations, refuses to subscribe to the justice of God.

We have thus considered Christ's death, as a true and proper sacrifice for sin. We might now take notice of an expression used in this Answer, and taken from the words of the apostle, that 'he once offered himself,'<sup>m</sup> and that 'without spot, to God.'<sup>n</sup> This offering being sufficient to answer the end designed, there was no need of repeating it, or of his doing any thing else with the same view; the justice of God having declared itself fully satisfied when he was raised from the dead. But, having already considered the infinite value of what he did and suffered, and its efficacy to bring about the work of our redemption, whereby it appears to be more excellent than all the sacrifices which were offered under the ceremonial law, I need not say any more on that subject. As we have also considered Christ as being sinless, and therefore offering himself as a Lamb, without spot and blemish, and how this was the necessary result of the extraordinary formation and union of the human nature with his divine Person, and the unction which he received from the Holy Ghost, I shall, at present, observe only what is said concerning his offering himself to God. This he is said, in the scripture just referred to, to have done 'through the eternal Spirit.' These words are commonly understood of his eternal Godhead, which added an infinite value to his sacrifice, or, like the altar, sanctified the gift; which is certainly a great truth. But it seems more agreeable to the most known sense of the word 'Spirit,' to understand them concerning his presenting himself, or making a tender of the service he performed, by the hand of the eternal Spirit unto God, as an acceptable sacrifice. The main difficulty in this scripture, however, is what is objected by the Socinians and others who deny



his deity, namely, how he could be said to offer himself to God, since that is the same as to say that he offered himself to himself, he being, as we formerly proved, God equal with the Father. But there is no absurdity in this assertion, if it be understood concerning the service performed by him in his human nature. This service, though rendered worthy to be offered by virtue of the union of the human nature with his divine Person, yet, as to the act of worship involved in it, terminated on the Godhead, or tended to the securing of the glory of the perfections of that divine nature which is common to all the divine Persons. It is in this sense that some ancient writers are to be understood, when they say that Christ may be said to offer up himself to himself; that is, the service performed in the human nature was the thing offered, and the object of the service, to which all acts of worship are referred, was the divine nature, which belongs to himself as well as the Father.

### *The Extent of the Atonement.*

We shall now consider the persons for whom, as a Priest, Christ offered himself, and so enter on that subject which is so much controverted in the present age, namely, whether Christ died for all men, or only for the elect whom he designed to redeem and bring to salvation. Here we shall premise some thoughts.

1. It is generally taken for granted, by those who maintain either side of the question, that the saving effects of Christ's death do not redound to all men, or that Christ did not die, in this respect, for all the world. To assert this would be to argue that all men shall be saved; which every one supposes contrary to the whole tenor of scripture.

2. It is allowed, by those who deny the extent of Christ's death to all men, as to what concerns their salvation, that it may truly be said, that there are, as the consequence of Christ's death, some blessings redounding to the whole world, and more especially to those who sit under the sound of the gospel. It is owing to the death of Christ that the day of God's patience is lengthened out; that the preaching of the gospel is continued to those who are favoured with it; and that this is attended, in many, with restraining grace, and some instances of external reformation, which, though they may not issue in salvation, have a tendency to prevent a multitude of sins, and a greater degree of condemnation which would otherwise ensue. These may be called the remote or secondary ends of Christ's death. Though it was principally and immediately designed to redeem the elect, and to purchase all saving blessings for them, which shall be applied in his own time and way; yet others are, in consequence, made partakers of some blessings of common providence, so far as they are subservient to the salvation of those for whom he gave himself a ransom.

3. It is allowed on both sides, and especially by all who own the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, that his death was sufficient to redeem the whole world, had God designed that it should be a price for them. This is the result of the infinite value of it.

4. The main question before us, therefore, is, Whether God designed the salvation of all mankind by the death of Christ, or whether he accepted it as a price of redemption for all, so that it might be said, that he redeemed some who shall not be saved by him? This is affirmed by many who maintain universal redemption,—a doctrine which we must take leave to deny. They add, as an explanation of their opinion, that Christ died in order that he might put all men into a salvable state, or procure for them a possibility of salvation, so that many might obtain it, by a right improvement of his death, who shall fall short of it; and also that it is in their power to frustrate the ends of his death, and so render it ineffectual. This we judge not only to be an error, but such as is highly derogatory to the glory of God. We shall endeavour to make this appear, and shall endeavour also to establish the contrary doctrine, namely, that Christ died to purchase salvation for none but those who shall obtain it.

I. That Christ did not die equally and alike for all men, appears from those dis-

tinguishing characters which accompany salvation, and which are given to those for whom he died.

1. They are called his 'sheep.' 'I am the good Shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.'<sup>o</sup> This metaphor must certainly imply, that they for whom Christ died are distinguished from the world, as the objects of his immediate care and special gracious providence. There are also several things in the context, containing a farther description of the 'sheep' for whom he laid down his life, which cannot be applied to the whole world. Thus it is said, 'I know my sheep, and am known of them,'<sup>p</sup> that is, with a knowledge of affection, as the word 'knowledge' is often used in scripture to mean, when applied to Christ or his people. Again, the sheep are described as those who shall certainly obtain salvation. Our Saviour says concerning them, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.'<sup>q</sup> But this privilege, without doubt, belongs not to the whole world. They are considered also as believers, inasmuch as faith is the necessary consequence of Christ's redemption, and accordingly are distinguished from the world, or that part of it which is left in unbelief and impenitency. Accordingly, Christ says, concerning those who rejected his Person and gospel, 'Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.'<sup>r</sup>

2. They for whom Christ died are called his 'friends,' and, as such, the objects of his highest love. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'<sup>s</sup> They are farther described, in the following words, as expressing their love to him by 'doing whatsoever he commandeth them.' And, as he calls them 'friends,' so they are distinguished from 'servants,' or slaves, who, though they may be made partakers of common favours, yet are not made acquainted with his secrets. 'All things,' says he to them, 'that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.'<sup>t</sup> They are farther distinguished from the world, inasmuch as they are 'chosen' by Christ, 'and ordained that they should go, and bring forth fruit.' There are also several other privileges which accompany salvation, which are said to belong to these friends of Christ for whom he died.

It is objected, that what Christ here says, concerning his friends, is particularly directed to his disciples, with whom at that time he conversed; that he considers them as persons who had made a right improvement of his redeeming love; and that, therefore, they were likely to reap the happy fruits and effects of that redemption which the whole world might be made partakers of if they would. We reply, that, whatever promises or privileges Christ's disciples were made partakers of, if these do not immediately respect their character as ministers, but as Christians, are equally to be applied to all believers. Now, that what Christ says to those whom he calls his friends is applicable to all believers, appears from their being described as 'abiding in him,' and 'bringing forth much fruit' under the powerful influence of his grace, 'without whom they can do nothing.' Moreover, when he speaks of the 'world's hating them, because they are not of the world,' and of 'the Comforter being sent to testify of him,'<sup>u</sup> in order to the confirmation of their faith, he speaks of what belongs to all believers as such. Hence, all believers are as much described as Christ's friends for whom he laid down his life, as his disciples to whom he more immediately directed his discourse. As for the other part of the objection, namely, that the disciples had made a right improvement of Christ's redemption, the reply which may be given is, that none but Christ's friends can be said to have made a right improvement of redemption, and therefore none but such have any ground to conclude that Christ died for them. But this is not the temper and character of the greater part of mankind. Hence, Christ did not die for the whole world. It is very evident, also, from the character which Christ gives of those for whom he died, that either they are or shall be of enemies made friends to him.

3. They are called, the 'children of God that were scattered abroad, who should be gathered together in one,' as the consequence of his death.<sup>x</sup> This gathering

<sup>o</sup> John x. 11.  
<sup>s</sup> John xv. 13.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 14.  
<sup>t</sup> Ver. 15, 16.

<sup>q</sup> Ver. 27, 28.  
<sup>u</sup> Ver. 19, 26.

<sup>r</sup> John x. 26.  
<sup>x</sup> John xi. 52.



together in one seems to import the same thing as that which the apostle speaks of as a display of the grace of the gospel, and which he calls their 'being gathered together in Christ their Head.'<sup>y</sup> One part of them he considers as already in heaven, and the other part of them as on earth, in their way to it; and he speaks such things concerning them in the preceding and following context, as cannot be said of any but those who shall be saved. Now, if Christ designed by his death to purchase this special privilege for his children, certainly it cannot be supposed that he died for the whole world. Elsewhere, too, the apostle, speaking of 'the Captain of our salvation being made perfect through sufferings,'<sup>z</sup> considers his being so as a means for 'bringing many sons unto glory;' which is a peculiar privilege belonging to the heirs of salvation, and not to the whole world.

It will be objected, that nothing can be proved from the words of so vile a person as Caiaphas, who relates the words on which our present argument is founded; and that, therefore, though they are contained in scripture, they do not prove the truth of the doctrine which is pretended to be established by them. But though Caiaphas was one of the vilest men on earth, and either did not believe this prophecy himself, or, if he did, made a very bad use of it; yet this does not invalidate the prediction. For while wicked men may occasionally have some prophetic intimations concerning future events, as Balaam had, the instrument which the Spirit of God makes use of in discovering them to mankind, does not render them less certain, since the worst of men may be employed to impart the greatest truths. It is sufficient to our purpose, therefore, that it is said, in the words immediately foregoing, that 'being high priest that year, he prophesied;' for it was no uncommon thing for the high priest to have prophetic intimations from God to deliver to the people, whatever his personal character might be. Hence, we must consider this as a divine oracle, and therefore infallibly true.

It is objected again, that, even allowing that what is here predicted was true, yet the subject of the prediction respects the nation of the Jews, concerning whom it cannot be said that every individual was in a state of salvation; so that it rather militates against, than proves the doctrine of particular redemption. But it is evident that, when it is said that 'Christ should die for that nation,' the meaning is, the children of God in that nation. The children of God who dwelt there, are opposed to his children who were scattered abroad. Hence, the meaning is, Christ died that they should not perish who have the temper and disposition of his children, wherever the place of their residence be.

4. They for whom Christ died are called his 'church,' of which he is 'the Head;' and 'the body,' of whom he is the Saviour;<sup>a</sup> and these he is said 'to have loved, and given himself for.'<sup>b</sup> Now, the church is distinguished from the world, as it is gathered out of it; the word 'church' being, in this place, taken in a very different sense from that in which it is understood in many other scriptures. The apostle does not mean merely a number of professing people, of whom some are sincere and others may be hypocrites, or of whom some shall be saved and others not; nor does he speak of those who are apparently in the way of salvation, as making a visible profession of the Christian religion. But he speaks of that church which is elsewhere called 'the spouse of Christ,' which is united to him by faith, and which shall in the end be eternally saved by him. This is very evident; for he speaks of them as 'sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word.'<sup>c</sup> And, as to their future state, they are such as shall hereafter be 'presented to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.'<sup>d</sup> Now, as it was for these that Christ died, it cannot be reasonably concluded that he died equally and alike for all mankind. We may add, that they are called 'his people,' whom he designed 'to save from their sins;'<sup>e</sup> and also 'a peculiar people,' who possess, and shall be known by the character of being 'zealous of good works.'<sup>f</sup> By his death, they are said not only to be redeemed, so as to be put into the possession of the external privileges of the gospel, but 'redeemed from all iniquity,' and purified unto himself. Now, all these expressions certainly denote those distin-

y Eph. i. 10.  
c Eph. v. 26.

z Heb. ii. 10.  
d Eph. v. 27.

a Eph. v. 23.  
e Matt. i. 21.

b Eph. v. 25.  
f Tit. ii. 14.

guishing blessings which Christ, by his death, designed to purchase for those who are the objects of his redemption.

II. That Christ did not die equally and alike for all mankind, appears from the fact that his death was an instance of the highest love, and that they who are concerned in it are in a peculiar manner obliged to bless him for it as such. The apostle joins these ideas together, when he says, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.'<sup>g</sup> Elsewhere it is said, 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood ;'<sup>h</sup> and herein it is said that 'God commendeth his love towards us,'<sup>i</sup> as that which is without a parallel. Besides, when the apostle speaks of the love of Christ expressed in his dying for men, he seems to distinguish it from that common love which is extended to all ; he says, 'Christ died for us.' That we may understand what he means, we must consider to whom it was that this epistle was directed, namely, to such as were 'beloved of God, called to be saints.'<sup>k</sup> They are described also as persons who 'were justified by Christ's blood,' and who 'should be saved from wrath through him ;' 'reconciled to God by the death of his Son,' and who 'should be saved by his life ;' and who, as such, 'joyed in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by him had received the atonement.'<sup>l</sup> Surely, then, they who were thus beloved by Christ, to whom he expressed his love by dying for them, must be distinguished from the world. Moreover, our Saviour speaks of this as far exceeding all that love which is in the breasts of men to one another: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends.'<sup>m</sup> We have, therefore, no reason to suppose that he died equally and alike for all ; for then there would be in his death an equal instance of love to the best and to the worst of men. Judas would have been as much beloved as Peter,—the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ's avowed enemies and persecutors, as much beloved as his disciples and faithful followers,—if there be nothing discriminating in his dying love. We must conclude, therefore, that he died to procure some distinguishing blessings for a part of mankind, which all are not partakers of. And as this love is so great and discriminating, it is the subject of the eternal praise of glorified saints. The 'new song' which is sung to him, is a celebrating of his glory, as having 'redeemed those to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,'<sup>n</sup> who were admitted into his immediate presence, as the objects of his distinguishing love. Certainly all this implies more than his purchasing the gospel-dispensation, or the discovery of the way of salvation to mankind, of whom the greater part neglect and despise it, and reap no saving advantage by it.

III. There are some circumstances attending the death of Christ, which argue that it was not designed for all the world. In particular, he died as a surety, or as one who undertook to pay that debt which the justice of God might have exacted of men in their own persons. This has already been proved ; and what may be inferred from it is, that if Christ, by dying, paid this debt, and when he rose again from the dead, received a discharge from the hand of justice, then God will not exact the debt twice, so as to bring those under the condemning sentence of the law whom Christ by his death has delivered from it. But this certainly is a privilege which does not belong to the whole world. Moreover, some are not, and never shall be, justified or discharged for the sake of a ransom paid. It may be concluded, therefore, that it was not given for them.

IV. It farther appears that Christ did not die equally and alike for all men, from the fact that he designed to purchase that dominion over those for whom he died, or that propriety in them, which would be the necessary result of his dying for them. As they are his trust and charge, given into his hand to be redeemed by his blood ; and as, in that respect, he undertook to satisfy, and by his death did satisfy, the justice of God for them ; so, as the result of this, he acquired a right to them, as Mediator, by redemption. Pursuant, also, to the eternal covenant between the Father and him, he obtained a right to bestow eternal life on all that were given to, and purchased by him. This tends to set forth the Father's glory, as he designed hereby to recover and bring back fallen creatures to himself ; and

<sup>g</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. v. 9—11.

<sup>h</sup> Rev. i. 5.

<sup>m</sup> John xv. 13.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. v. 8.

<sup>n</sup> Rev. v. 9.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. i. 7.



it redounds to Christ's glory, as Mediator. Herein not only does he discover the infinite value of his obedience and sufferings, but all his redeemed ones are rendered the monuments of his love and grace, and shall for ever be employed in celebrating his praise. But certainly this is inconsistent with his death being ineffectual to answer this end; and consequently he died for none but those whom he will bring to glory, which he could not be said to have done, had he laid down his life for the whole world.

V. That Christ did not die, or pay a price of redemption for all the world, farther appears from the fact, that salvation, whether begun, carried on, or perfected, is represented, in scripture, as the application of it; and that all the graces which are wrought by the Spirit in believers, are described as its necessary result and consequence. This will appear, if we consider that, when Christ speaks of his Spirit as 'sent to convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to guide' his people 'into all truth,' he says, 'He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.'<sup>o</sup> The meaning is, that the Spirit should apply what Christ had purchased; whereby his glory, as our Redeemer, would be eminently illustrated. Elsewhere, also, when the apostle speaks of the Spirit's work of regeneration and sanctification, he considers it as the result of Christ's death. Accordingly, the Spirit is said to be 'shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.'<sup>p</sup> Again, when Christ is spoken of as 'redeeming them that were under the law,' their receiving 'the adoption of sons,'<sup>q</sup> and all the privileges contained in it, are considered as the necessary consequence of his redeeming them. Moreover, Christ's being 'not spared, but delivered up' unto death for those who are described as chosen, called, justified, and such as shall be hereafter glorified, is assigned as a convincing evidence, that 'God will with him freely give them all things.'<sup>r</sup> Now this cannot, with the least shadow of reason, be applied to the whole world; so that Christ did not die for, or redeem, all mankind.

That the application of redemption may farther appear to be of equal extent with the purchase of it, we shall endeavour to prove that all those graces which believers are made partakers of here, as well as complete salvation which is the consummation of it hereafter, are the purchase of Christ's death. Here we principally oppose those who defend the doctrine of universal redemption, in that open and self-consistent way, which the Pelagians generally take. They suppose that faith, and repentance, and all other graces, are entirely in our own power; otherwise the conditionality of the gospel-covenant, as they rightly observe, could never be defended, and they, for whom Christ died, namely, all mankind, must necessarily repent and believe. In this manner a late writer<sup>s</sup> argues, in consistency with his own scheme. Some others, however, who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, and, at the same time, that of efficacious grace, pluck down with one hand what they build up with the other. It is the former of these principally that we are now to oppose, when we speak of the graces of the Spirit as purchased by Christ's blood. Now, in proof of our position, let it be observed that complete salvation is styled 'the purchased possession';<sup>t</sup> that our 'deliverance from the wrath to come,' is not only inseparably connected with, but contained in it; and that both are considered as purchased by the death of Christ.<sup>u</sup> The apostle, speaking elsewhere of the church as arrived at its state of perfection in heaven, and of its being 'without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,' and 'without blemish,' that is, when its sanctification is brought to perfection, considers this as the accomplishment of the great end of Christ's 'giving himself for it,' or laying down his life to purchase it.<sup>x</sup> It follows, then, that all that grace, by which believers are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and which is the beginning of this salvation, is the purchase of Christ's blood. Accordingly, God is said to have 'blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places'—or, as it may be better rendered, 'in what concerns heavenly things'—'in Christ,'<sup>y</sup> that is, for the sake of Christ's death, which purchased these blessings. Hence, faith and repentance,

<sup>o</sup> John xvi. 14.    <sup>p</sup> Tit. iii. 6.    <sup>q</sup> Gal. iv. 5.    <sup>r</sup> Rom. viii. 32.    <sup>s</sup> See Whitby's Discourse, &c. pages 110—112.    <sup>t</sup> Eph. i. 14.    <sup>u</sup> 1 Thess. i. 10. Rom. v. 9, 10.    <sup>x</sup> Eph. v. 25, 27.    <sup>y</sup> Eph. i. 3.

and all other graces, which are wrought in us in this world, are purchased by Christ's death. Accordingly, it is said, 'Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe,' as well as to exercise those graces which are necessary in those who are called 'to suffer for his sake.'<sup>z</sup> Elsewhere also, God is said to have 'exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance,' as well as 'forgiveness of sins.'<sup>a</sup> Now, as his exaltation includes his resurrection from the dead, these words plainly argue that he died to give repentance, and consequently that this grace was purchased by him. Moreover, when our Saviour speaks of 'sending the Spirit, the Comforter, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,' which comprises the internal work of grace wrought by him, he considers this as the consequence of his leaving the world, after he had finished the work of redemption by his death, and so purchased this privilege for them.<sup>b</sup>

VI. That Christ did not die for all mankind, appears from his not interceding for them. He says, 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine,' and not for his disciples alone, 'but for them also which should believe on him through their word.'<sup>c</sup> This farther appears from a believer's freedom from condemnation being founded on Christ's intercession, as well as his death and resurrection;<sup>d</sup> and from Christ being styled at the same time, 'an Advocate with the Father,' and a 'propitiation for our sins.'<sup>e</sup> Our position may be farther argued, from the nature of Christ's intercession, which, as will be considered in its proper place,<sup>f</sup> consists in his presenting himself, in the merit of his death, on behalf of those for whom he suffered; as also from his being always heard in that which he pleads for.<sup>g</sup> This argues that they shall be saved, otherwise it could not be supposed that he intercedes for their salvation. But this he cannot be said to do for all mankind, as appears by the event, in that all shall not be saved.

It is objected, that Christ prayed for his enemies; that his doing so was foretold concerning him by the prophet, who says, 'He made intercession' for the transgressors;<sup>h</sup> and that this prophecy was accomplished at his crucifixion, when he said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Now, say the objectors, that which Christ here prayed for was forgiveness, which is a privilege connected with salvation; and he prayed for this in behalf of the multitude that crucified him. But, they add, it cannot reasonably be supposed that all these were saved; so that if Christ's death and intercession respect the same persons, and necessarily infer their salvation, it would follow that this rude and inhuman multitude were all saved, which they who deny universal redemption do not suppose.—In answer to this objection, some suppose that there is foundation for a distinction between those supplications which Christ, in his human nature, put up to God, as being bound by the moral law, in common with all mankind, to pray for his enemies, and his mediatorial prayer or intercession. In the former of these respects, he made prayer for his enemies; and his prayer for them, though it argued the greatness of his affection for them, yet did not necessarily infer their salvation. In this manner, Stephen, when dying, is represented as praying for those who stoned him, when he said, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'<sup>k</sup> In this manner, also, our Saviour prays for himself in the garden, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' <sup>l</sup> whereby he signifies the formidableness of the death he was to undergo, and that his human nature could not but dread such a degree of suffering. This description of prayer they suppose to be different from his mediatorial intercession for his people; in which he represents the merit of his death, as what would effectually procure the blessings which it purchased. In this latter sense, he could not be said to pray for any of those who crucified him, who are excluded from salvation. But, as this reply to the objection has some difficulties attending it which render it less satisfactory, especially as it supposes that he was not heard in that which he prayed for, when he desired that God would 'forgive them,' I would choose to take another method in answering it, namely, that when

<sup>z</sup> Phil. i. 29.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. viii. 34.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. liii. 12.

<sup>a</sup> Acts v. 31.

<sup>e</sup> John ii. 1, 2.

<sup>i</sup> Luke xxiii. 34.

<sup>b</sup> John xvi. 7, 8.

<sup>f</sup> See Quest. lv.

<sup>k</sup> Acts vii. 60.

<sup>c</sup> John xvii. 9, 20.

<sup>g</sup> John xi. 42.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. xxvi. 39.



Christ prays that God would 'forgive them,' he means that God would not immediately pour forth the vials of his wrath on that wicked generation as their crime deserved, but that they might still continue to be a people favoured with the means of grace. This he prays for, and he was answered. His intercession for them, though it had not an immediate respect to the salvation of all of them, had, notwithstanding, a subserviency to the gathering in of his elect amongst them, whose salvation was principally intended by this intercession, as it was for them that he shed his blood. Accordingly, I apprehend that his desire that God would 'forgive them,' implies the same thing as Moses' request in behalf of Israel did, when he said, 'Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, until now.'<sup>m</sup> Here 'to pardon' means nothing else but God's not punishing them as their sin deserved, in an immediate and exemplary way and manner.

VII. The doctrine of universal redemption has some absurd consequences attending it, not consistent with the divine perfections.

1. It would give occasion for Christ to be called the Saviour of those who shall not be eventually saved by him,—the Redeemer of many who are held in chains by the justice of God, and who receive no saving benefit by his redemption. It would give occasion also for Christ being said to express the highest instance of love, in dying for those who shall for ever be the objects of his hatred. But this implies a contradiction. What is it but to say, that he delivers those from the wrath to come,<sup>n</sup> who are and shall be for ever children of wrath? Hence, we must either assert universal salvation, or deny universal redemption.

2. It also follows from the doctrine of universal redemption, that Christ satisfied the justice of God for all the sins of all men. To lay down a price of redemption is to discharge the whole debt, otherwise it would be to no purpose. Now, if he satisfied for all the sins of every man, he did this that no sin should be their ruin; and consequently he died to take away the guilt of final impenitency in those who shall perish. They have hence, by virtue of his death, a right to salvation, which they shall not obtain. It follows then, that, since he did not die for all the sins of all men, he did not, by his death, redeem all men.

3. If Christ died for all men, he intended hereby their salvation, or that they should live. But it is certain he did not intend the salvation of all men; for then his design must be frustrated, with respect to a part of those for whom he died; and to say this, is a reflection on his wisdom, as not adapting the means to the end. Moreover, the doctrine that he died for all men supposes that his attaining the end he designed by his death, depends on the will of man; and, consequently, it subjects him to disappointment, and renders God's eternal purpose dependent on man's conduct.

4. Since God designed, by the death of Christ, to bring to himself a revenue of glory, in proportion to the infinite value of it, and Christ our great Mediator, was, as the prophet says, to have 'a portion with the great,' and to 'divide the spoil with the strong,' as the consequence of his 'pouring out his soul unto death,'<sup>o</sup> it follows, that if all are not saved for whom Christ died, the Father and the Son would lose that glory which they designed to attain by the Redeemer's death, as the work would be left incomplete,—and also that a great part of mankind cannot take occasion, from Christ's redeeming them, to adore and magnify that grace which is displayed in his doing so, since it is not eventually conducive to their salvation.

#### *Examination of Arguments for Universal Redemption.*

Having endeavoured to prove the doctrine of particular redemption, we shall now consider the arguments generally brought by those who defend the contrary scheme. They suppose that God designed, as the consequence of Christ's death, to save all mankind, on condition of their repenting and believing; and that this is according to the tenor of the gospel-covenant, which is substituted in the room of that which

was violated by man's apostacy from God, and by which sincere obedience comes in the room of that perfect obedience which was the condition of the first covenant. This they call man's being brought into a salvable state by Christ's death; so that, according to them, Christ rendered salvation possible, while faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, render it certain. So far as concerns the design of God in sending Christ to redeem the world, they suppose that God determined to put man into such a state that all may be saved if they will. As to the event, namely, man's complying with the condition, they who defend universal redemption are divided in their sentiments. Some suppose that Christ purchased faith and repentance for a certain number of mankind, namely, those who shall repent and believe, and that, in consequence, he will work those graces in them, while others who had not these graces purchased for them shall perish, though Christ has redeemed them. These suppose that redemption is both universal and particular, in different respects; *universal*, in that all who sit under the sound of the gospel have a conditional grant of grace contained in it, whereby they are put into a salvable state, or possibility of attaining salvation; and *particular*, with respect to those who shall repent and believe, and so attain salvation. In this sense they apply that scripture in which God is said to be 'the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.'<sup>p</sup> This some call a middle way, between the Pelagian and Calvinistic methods of reasoning about this subject. It appears, however, to be inconsistent with itself; inasmuch as they who adopt it are forced sometimes to decline what they have been contending for on one side, when pressed with some arguments brought in defence of the other. We shall therefore pass it over, and consider the self-consistent scheme in which universal redemption is maintained.

The sum of all their statements, who defend the doctrine of universal redemption in the Pelagian way, is this, that Christ died, not to purchase salvation absolutely for any, but to make way for God's entering into a new or gospel covenant with men, in which salvation is promised on condition of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, which they suppose to be in the power of those who have the gospel. That the heathen may not be excluded, they say that though it cannot be styled a gospel covenant to them, there are abatements made as to what concerns faith founded on divine relation, and that the only condition which entitles them to salvation is their yielding sincere obedience to the law of nature, in proportion to their light. They add, that this gospel covenant must be conditional, otherwise it could not be called 'a covenant,' as wanting an essential ingredient contained in every covenant; and that the conditions of it must be in our own power, otherwise the overture of salvation, depending on the performance of them, would be illusory; and it could not be called a covenant of grace, inasmuch as there can be no grace, or favour, in promising a blessing upon impossible conditions; nor could it be styled a better covenant than that which God entered into with our first parents, in which the conditions were in their own power; nor could it be an expedient to repair the ruins of the fall, or bring man, in any sense, into a salvable state. Hence, say they, the doctrine of particular redemption is not only followed by many absurd consequences which detract from the glory of the gospel, but is contrary to the holiness, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and so derogates as much from the divine perfections as any thing which is argued in defence of universal redemption can be pretended to do. To sum up the argument, there is an appeal to scripture, as giving countenance, in a multitude of instances, to the doctrine of universal redemption. This is the substance of all that is said in defence of that doctrine. We shall now, in opposition to it, take leave to make some observations.

It is taken for granted, but not sufficiently proved, that Christ died to purchase the covenant of grace. But if, as was formerly observed,<sup>q</sup> the difference between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace be only circumstantial, the death of Christ is included among the conditions of this covenant; and if so, the covenant itself could not be the purchase of his death. But if, by Christ's pur-

<sup>p</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 10.

<sup>q</sup> See Sect. 'Distinction between the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace,' under Quest. xxxi.



chasing the covenant of grace, they mean only his purchasing the graces given in the covenant, we are far from denying it, though they generally do. What we are principally to oppose, therefore, is their sense of the conditionality of the covenant of grace, and of its being essential to a covenant to be conditional, namely, to depend on uncertain conditions, in our power to perform, it being, as they suppose, left to the freedom of our own will to comply with or reject them, and thereby to establish or disannul the covenant. But we have elsewhere proved that the word 'covenant' is often used in scripture, without the idea of a condition annexed to it,<sup>r</sup> and have considered also in what respects those ideas contained in a conditional covenant between man and man, are to be excluded when we speak of a covenant between God and man.<sup>s</sup> We have likewise endeavoured, in maintaining the doctrine of election, to defend the absoluteness of God's will, and have showed in what sense we are to understand those scriptures which are laid down in a conditional form.<sup>t</sup> Now, as these matters may, with a little variation, be applied to our present argument, we shall, to avoid repetition, say nothing farther in answer to the part of the argument we are now considering, but only that it implies God to be, in many respects, like ourselves, and supposes that it is in our power to frustrate the design of the death of Christ, and render that which was the highest display of divine grace ineffectual, and so prevent his having that glory which he designed to bring to his own name thereby.

It is further argued, that as the covenant of grace is a better covenant than that which God made with man in innocency, so the conditions of it must be in our own power, otherwise God, by insisting on the performance of what is impossible, subverts the design of the gospel, and the covenant ceases to be a covenant of grace. But though we freely own that the covenant of grace is, in many respects, better than that which God entered into with man in innocency, and that it would not be so were it impossible for those who are concerned in it to attain the blessings promised to the heirs of salvation; yet we cannot allow that it must necessarily be conditional, in the sense in which some understand the word, much less that either the conditions of it are in our own power, or the design of the gospel must be subverted. The fact that God requires faith and all other graces in the covenant dispensation, and that he has connected them with salvation, does not overthrow the grace of the covenant, but rather establishes it; for, by the faithfulness of God, and the intercession of Christ, grace and salvation are not only purchased for, but promised and secured to all who are redeemed, and shall certainly be applied to them. The circumstance, too, that the graces of the Spirit are not in our own power, is so far from overthrowing the design of the gospel, that it tends to advance the glory of it; as God hereby takes occasion to set forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in making his people meet for glory, and bringing them at last to possess it. Moreover, though it is not possible for all to attain salvation, this fact should be no discouragement to any one to attend on those means of grace under which we are to hope for the saving effects of Christ's death, whereby we may conclude that eternal life is purchased for us, and we shall at last be brought to it.

It is further alleged, that the covenant of grace was designed to repair the ruins of the fall, or that God intended by it to bring man into a salvable state. But we are never told, in scripture, that what was lost by our apostacy from God, is to be compensated by the extent of grace and salvation to all mankind; and the design of the gospel is not to discover this to the world, but that the exceeding riches of divine grace should be 'made known on the vessels of mercy, before prepared unto glory.'<sup>u</sup> This is, as some express it, the plank which remains after the shipwreck,<sup>x</sup> or the great foundation of our hope and possibility of escaping everlasting destruction; and it is a much better ground of security, than to lay the whole stress of our salvation on the best improvements of corrupt nature, or those endeavours which we are to use to improve the liberty of our will in order to our escaping ruin, without dependence on the divine assistance, which is the method that they take to attain salvation, who thus defend the doctrine of universal redemption. As for

<sup>r</sup> See Sect. 'The meaning of the word Covenant,' under Quest. xxxi.

<sup>s</sup> See Quest. xxxii.

<sup>t</sup> See Sect. 'The Eternity, &c. of the Purpose of Election,' under Quest. xii, xiii.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. ix. 23.

<sup>x</sup> Tabula post naufragium.

our being brought into a salvable state by the death of Christ, the gospel nowhere gives all mankind ground to expect salvation, but only those who have the marks and characters of Christ's redeemed ones. Nor are these brought by his death to a mere possibility of attaining it; but the scripture represents them as having 'the earnest' or 'first fruits' of it, and speaks of 'Christ in them' as 'the hope of glory.' They are said also to be 'reconciled to God by the death of his Son,'<sup>2</sup> which is more than their having a mere possibility of salvation, as the result and consequence of Christ's death.

We are next to consider the allegation that the doctrine of particular redemption is derogatory to the divine perfections, and that many absurd consequences attend it. It is very common, in all methods of reasoning, and particularly in defending or opposing the doctrine of universal redemption, for persons to endeavour to make it appear, that the scheme of doctrine which they oppose is chargeable with absurdities; and, as we have taken the same method in opposing universal redemption, it may reasonably be expected that the doctrine of particular redemption should have many absurd consequences charged upon it. To this charge we shall endeavour to reply, that it may be discerned whether the charge be just or not.

The doctrine of particular redemption is supposed then, to be inconsistent with the goodness of God, as it renders salvation impossible to the greater part of mankind, and their state irretrievable by any means which can be used, and so has a tendency to lead them to despair. Now, it must be owned that they for whom Christ did not die cannot be saved, and that, had God described any persons by name, or given some visible character by which it might be certainly concluded that they were not redeemed, it would follow that their state would be desperate. But this is not his usual method of dealing with mankind. He might, indeed, have done it; and then such would have been thereby excluded from the means of grace, and not encouraged to attend them. But he has, in wisdom and sovereignty, concealed from the world the event of things, with respect to the individuals who were redeemed. There is hence a vast difference between men's concluding that a part of the world are excluded from redemption, and that they themselves are included in that number. We have no warrant to say the latter concerning either ourselves or any others, especially so long as we are under the means of grace. There is, indeed, one character of persons in the gospel which gives ground to conclude that Christ did not die for them; and that is what respects those who had committed the unpardonable sin. I shall not, at present, enter into the dispute whether that sin can now be committed or not, since we may have occasion to insist on the subject under another Head. But there seems to be sufficient ground to determine, either that this cannot be certainly known, since the extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits is now ceased; or, at least, that it cannot be applied to any who attend on the means of grace with a desire of receiving spiritual advantage thereby. Again, if Christ's not dying for the whole world be a means to lead men to despair, as salvation is hereby rendered impossible, this consequence may, with equal evidence, be deduced from the supposition that all mankind shall not be saved, which they who defend universal redemption pretend not to deny. But will any one say, that this supposition leads men to despair? Or ought it to be reckoned a reflection on the divine goodness, that so many are left to perish in their fallen state by the judicial hand of God, which might have applied salvation to all, as well as purchased it for all mankind?

The doctrine of particular redemption is farther supposed to be inconsistent with the preaching of the gospel, which is generally styled a door of hope. The doctrine, it is said, is such that the dispensation that we are under cannot be called a day of grace; and it renders all the overtures of salvation made to sinners illusory, and contains a reflection, not only on the grace of God, but on his holiness. In order to our replying to this, something must be premised to explain what we mean by a day of grace, and the hope of the gospel which accompanies it. Now, by calling the state of things under which we live 'a day of grace,' we do not



mean a dispensation in which all men might repent and believe, and so obtain salvation by their own power, without the special influences of the Holy Ghost, for this would be to ascribe that to man which is peculiar to God; nor do we mean that God will give special grace to all who sit under the sound of the gospel, for this is contrary to common observation and experience, since many make a profession of religion who are destitute of saving grace. As for the hope of the gospel, or that door of hope which is opened in it to sinners, we cannot understand any thing else by it, but that all without distinction are commanded and encouraged to wait on God in his instituted means of grace, while the event must be left to him who gives or withholds success to them as he pleases. All have this encouragement, that, peradventure, they may obtain grace, under the means of grace; nor is the encouragement inconsistent with these means being styled a door of hope. God is not obliged to grant sinners a greater degree of hope than this, to encourage them to wait on him in his ordinances; though, indeed, there is a farther motive to induce us, namely, that this is the ordinary way in which he works grace. Or, if God is pleased to give us desires after the efficacy of his grace, or any degree of conviction of sin and misery, this is still a farther ground of hope, though it falls short of that grace of hope which accompanies salvation.—As to the preaching of the gospel, and its overtures of salvation to all, being, on the supposition of Christ's not dying for all men, alleged to be illusory, and repugnant to the holiness of God, we do not deny that, in preaching the gospel, Christ is offered to the chief of sinners, or that the proclamation of grace is made public to all, without distinction. This, however, will not overthrow the doctrine of particular redemption, if we rightly consider what is done in offering Christ to sinners. Let it be observed, then, that God has given us no warrant to enter into his secret determinations respecting the event of things, or to give any persons ground to conclude that they are redeemed, and have a warrant to apply to themselves the promise of salvation, or any blessings which accompany it, while in an unconverted state. Ministers are not to address their discourses to a mixed multitude of professing Christians, in such a way as if they knew that they were all effectually called and chosen of God. Our Saviour compares them to 'the faithful and wise steward,' whose business it is 'to give to all their portion of meat in due season.'<sup>a</sup> They are, therefore, consistently with what is contained in scripture, to tell their hearers that salvation is purchased for a part of mankind, that they know not but they may be of the number, and that therefore they must be importunate with God for that grace which will be an evidence to them that they are so. Again, Christ's being offered to sinners, in the preaching of the gospel, is his being set forth therein as a most desirable object, altogether lovely, worthy to be embraced and submitted to; and not only so, but that he will certainly save all whom he effectually calls, inasmuch as he has purchased salvation for them. Further, the preaching of the gospel includes an informing of sinners, that it is their indispensable duty and interest to believe in Christ, and that, as a means to this, they are commanded and encouraged to wait on him for that grace which can enable them to believe. Also as a farther encouragement, the gospel lets them know that there is a certain connection between grace and salvation; so that none who are enabled by faith to come to Christ, shall be cast out and rejected by him. This is the preaching and the hope of the gospel; and in this sense, the overtures of salvation are made. But this is not in the least inconsistent with the doctrine of particular redemption.<sup>b</sup>

It is objected, however, that though this be such a method of preaching the gospel as is consistent with the doctrine of special redemption; yet there is another way of preaching it which is more agreeable to the express words of scripture, and founded on the doctrine of universal redemption. Sinners, say the objectors, ought to be told, that the great God, in the most affectionate manner, expostulates with them, to persuade them to accept of life and salvation, when he represents himself as 'having no pleasure in the death of the wicked,' and with an earnestness of expression,

<sup>a</sup> Luke xii. 42.

<sup>b</sup> See this insisted on, and further explained, in answer to an objection, to the same purpose against the doctrine of particular election, under Quest. xii. xiii.

says, 'Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'<sup>c</sup> The design of the gospel, they add, is to let the world know that God's dealings with mankind, in general, are full of goodness; he would not have any perish, and therefore has sent his Son to redeem them all, and in consequence, pleads with them to turn to him, that they may reap the benefits purchased. But whatever be the sense of the exhortatory expressions which we frequently meet with in scripture, we must not suppose that they imply, that the saving grace of repentance is in our own power; for that is contrary, not only to the sense of many other scriptures, but to the experience of every true penitent, whose language is like that of Ephraim, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.'<sup>d</sup> Nor must we conclude, that God designs to save those who shall not be saved; for then he could not say, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.'<sup>e</sup> If these ideas, as unworthy of God, be abstracted from the sense of such scriptures, we may understand them in a way which is consistent, not only with the divine perfections, but with the doctrine of particular redemption. That this may appear, let it be considered that while it is a very common thing in scripture for God to condescend to use human modes of speaking, and those, in particular, by which various passions are set forth, we must not conclude that these passions are in God, as they are in men. Such expostulations, when used by us, signify that we earnestly desire the good of others, and are often warning them of their danger; but that all is to no purpose, they being obstinately set on their own ruin, which we can by no means prevent; it being either out of our power to help them, or our rendering them help being inconsistent with our honour. This draws forth such expostulations from men. But the weakness implied in them, is by no means to be applied to God. It cannot be said to be out of his power to give grace to impenitent sinners; nor, in case he has so determined, will it tend to his dishonour to bestow it. But that we may understand the sense of these scriptures, we shall offer some particular observations.

'Life' and 'death,' in scripture, are often used to signify the external dispensations of providence, as to what concerns the good or evil which God would bring on his people. Thus it is said, 'See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.'<sup>f</sup> Here 'life' is explained, in the following words, as signifying their being 'multiplied and blessed in the land, whither they were to go to possess it.' When God advises them, in a following verse, 'to choose life,' the consequence is, that 'both they and their seed should live, that they might dwell in the land which the Lord sware to their fathers to give them.' Elsewhere, when God says, by the prophet Jeremiah, 'I set before you the way of life, and the way of death,'<sup>g</sup> he immediately explains the language as proclaiming an expedient for their escaping temporal judgments. 'He that abideth in the city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans, shall live.'<sup>h</sup> I cannot but see reason to conclude, that many other expressions of a similar nature, in which God promises life, or threatens death to the house of Israel, by the prophets, who often warned them of their being carried into captivity, and dying in their enemies' land, have a more immediate respect to their temporal prosperity or adversity. That proverbial expression which the Israelites are represented as making use of, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge,'<sup>i</sup> seems to intimate no more than this: 'Our fathers have sinned, and thereby deserved that the nation should be ruined by being carried captive, and we must suffer for their sins.' In answer, God tells them that the proverb should not be used by them, but that the evil should be brought on them for their own iniquities, or prevented by their reformation, namely, by forsaking their idolatry, whoredom, violence, oppression, and other abominations. He then adds, The soul that sinneth, it shall die;<sup>j</sup> that is, "If you continue to commit those vile enormities, you shall be followed with all those judgments which shall tend to your utter ruin; but 'if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.'"<sup>k</sup> If this be the sense of these and similar texts, then it was not wholly out of their

c Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

d Jer. xxxi. 18.

e Isa. xlv. 10.

f Deut. xxx. 15, 19, 20.

g Jer. xxi. 8.

h Ezek. xviii. 2.

i Ezek. xviii. 12, 13, 17, 18.

k Ezek. xviii. 21.



own power thus to turn to God, how much soever that special grace which accompanies salvation be out of our power. It is one thing to say that man cannot work a principle of grace in himself, or do that by his own power which is the special gift and work of the Spirit of God, and, as the consequence thereof, have ground to expect eternal salvation; and another thing to say that 'he cannot abstain from some gross enormities, as an expedient to prevent desolating judgments. It may, however, not be allowed that this is the sense of all those scriptures which promise or threaten 'life' or 'death;' and I do not pretend peremptorily to assert that it is. Let me add, therefore, that if, in the scriptures referred to, spiritual and eternal blessings be included in the word 'life,' and the contrary in the word 'death,' we may account for the sense of them without supposing that God designs what shall never come to pass, namely, the universal salvation of mankind, though a part of them shall not be saved. We may do this by considering desire in God as signifying the effects of desire in men.<sup>l</sup> Thus, his not desiring a thing, denotes it not to be the object of desire. Accordingly, his not desiring the death of sinners, implies that they ought to endeavour to avoid it as the most formidable evil. On the other hand, his taking pleasure in a thing, as he does in the salvation of his people, signifies not only his intending to save them, but the inexpressible happiness which they shall attain by their salvation. Moreover, his exhorting them, as an expedient to attain this privilege, 'to turn,' signifies the inseparable connection between salvation and repentance, or that turning to God, though it is God's gift, is, notwithstanding, our act and our indispensable duty. If, then, the scriptures in question be understood in either of the two senses we have mentioned, they are far from giving countenance to the doctrine of universal redemption.

There is another absurd consequence charged upon the doctrine of special redemption, namely, that it is inconsistent with our being exhorted and encouraged to repent and believe 'for the remission of sins,' or 'to the saving of the soul,' as scripture gives all men a warrant to do.<sup>m</sup> Since all are commanded to exercise these graces, and to expect salvation as connected therewith, the doctrine of particular redemption, as a late writer insinuates, puts us under a necessity of believing a lie. He adds, that if the condition annexed to the promise of salvation be impossible, and known to be so, it gives no encouragement to set about it; and that if he who promises knows it to be so, he promises nothing, because his promise respects that which a person cannot obtain, or be the better for, whereby he is deluded, and a cheat put upon him, by pretending kindness in making the promise, and intending no such thing.<sup>n</sup> Thus that author represents the doctrine of particular redemption as containing the most blasphemous consequences which words can express. He must, therefore, have been very sure that his argument was unanswerably just; though, I hope, we shall be able to make it appear that it is far from being so. That we may do this, let it be considered that we are to distinguish between a person's being bound to believe in Christ, and to believe that Christ died for him. The first act of faith does not contain a person's being persuaded that Christ died for him, but that he is the object of faith, as he is represented to be in scripture. Accordingly, it supposes that we are convinced that Christ is the Messiah, that he purchased salvation for all who shall attain it, and is able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by him, and also that it is our duty and interest to come to him. Moreover, as saving faith is not in our own power, but the work and gift of divine grace, we are encouraged to wait on God in his ordinances, and with fervent prayer to beseech him that he would work this grace in us; acknowledging that, if he should deny us this blessing, there is no unrighteousness in him. We are also to continue waiting on him, and using all those means which are in our power, though they cannot attain their end without his blessing. And when he is pleased to work this grace in us, we shall be enabled to put forth another act of faith, which is properly saving, and is intended by that scripture which speaks of 'believing to the saving of the soul.' This consists in receiving him, and resting on him for salvation, hoping that he has died for us, inasmuch as he has given us that temper

<sup>l</sup> *Passiones tribuuntur Deo quoad effectum.*  
<sup>n</sup> See Whitby's Discourse, pages 145, 146.

<sup>m</sup> Acts ii. 38; Heb. x. 39.

and disposition of soul which is included in the character given of those for whom Christ died. Again, we must farther distinguish between God's commanding all who sit under the sound of the gospel to believe in Christ, and his giving them ground to expect salvation before they believe in him. Faith and repentance may be asserted to be duties incumbent on all, and demanded of them; while, at the same time, it does not follow that all are given to expect salvation upon the mere declaration that they are so. Accordingly, the command and encouragement are to be considered in this order,—first, as they respect our obligation to believe, and then, as they respect our hope of salvation. Now, neither the former nor the latter of these does in the least infer that God intended to save all mankind, or give those ground to expect salvation who do not believe in Christ. Further, as to what is suggested concerning salvation being promised on such conditions as are known both by God and man to be impossible, the only answer which need be given is, that though 'with men this is impossible, yet with God all things are possible.'<sup>o</sup> In the sense of faith and repentance evincing our right to claim an interest in Christ and that salvation which is purchased by him, we do not, as was formerly observed, oppose their being called conditions of salvation, by those who are tenacious of that mode of speaking;<sup>p</sup> nor do we call them impossible conditions, any otherwise than as they are so without the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit. Now, we cannot think that our asserting that it is impossible that all mankind should thus repent and believe, is a doctrine contrary to scripture; for scripture gives us ground to conclude that all men shall not be saved, and consequently that all shall not 'believe to the saving of the soul.' But when we consider the impossibility of all men repenting and believing, we do not make that supposition of God having given all mankind ground to expect saving faith, upon which the blasphemous suggestion relating to his deluding men is founded. It is enough for us to say, that God has not told any one who attends on his ordinances in hope of obtaining this grace, that he will not give him faith. More than this needs not be desired by persons to induce them to perform this duty, while praying and waiting for the happy event, namely, our obtaining saving graces, and so being enabled to conclude that Christ has died for us.

If all the absurdities already mentioned will not overthrow the doctrine of particular redemption, there is another argument which they who oppose it conclude to be unanswerable, namely, that it does not conduce so much to advance the grace of God, as to assert that Christ died for all men, inasmuch as more are included herein as the objects of divine favour, so that God is more glorified. But it does not tend to advance the divine perfections, to suppose that God designed to save any who shall perish; for that, as was formerly considered, would be to argue that the purpose of God, with respect to the salvation of many, is frustrated. Besides, the display of the glory of divine grace on which the stress of the argument is laid, does not so much consist in the extent of favour with respect to a greater number of persons, as it does in its being free and undeserved, and in its tending, for this reason, to lay the highest obligation on those who are concerned in it. This is the most known sense of the word 'grace.' But as it will be objected, that this is only a criticism respecting the sense of a word, we remark, farther, that if the grace or goodness of God be more magnified by universal than by particular redemption, as including more who are the objects of redemption, the same reasoning would hold good, were it attempted to be proved that there must be an universal salvation of mankind. On the principle assumed, this would be a greater display of divine goodness, than for God to save only a few; and it would be yet more eminently displayed, had he saved not only all mankind, but fallen angels. Shall the goodness of God be pretended to be reflected on, because he does not extend it to all who might have been its objects had he pleased? Has he not a right to do what he will with his own? And may not his favour be communicated in a discriminating way, whereby it will be more advanced and adored, by those who are the objects of it, without our taking occasion to reply against him, or say 'what dost thou?' We may add, that they who make use of this reasoning, ought to consider that it



does not militate more against our doctrine than against that which they maintain, namely, that God hath put all mankind into a salvable state, or that Christ, by his death, procured a possibility of salvation for all. According to their argument this is not so great a display of the divine goodness, as if God had actually saved all mankind, which he might have done : for he might have given repentance and remission of sins to all, as well as sent his Son to die for all. On the principle of this argument, therefore, universal redemption cannot be defended, without asserting universal salvation.

Having thus examined those absurdities which are pretended to be fastened on the doctrine of particular redemption, we proceed to consider the last and principal argument which is usually brought against it. This is, that the doctrine is contrary to the express words of scripture. Some speak with as much assurance as if there were not one word in scripture, intimating that our Lord died only for a few, or only for the elect.<sup>q</sup> Others, however, own that there are some scriptures which assert particular redemption ; but assert that these are but few, and that the doctrine of universal redemption must be acquiesced in, as being maintained by a far greater number of scriptures. But, it is not the number of scriptures, brought in defence of their side of the question, which will give any great advantage to the cause they maintain, unless it could be made appear that they are understood in the true and genuine sense in which the Holy Ghost intended them. We shall, therefore, inquire into the sense of them, and endeavour to prove that it does not overthrow the doctrine we have been maintaining, how much soever the mode of expression may seem to oppose it. In order to this, we shall first consider in what sense 'all,' 'all men,' 'the world,' 'all the world,' and similar words, are understood in scripture, as well as in common modes of speaking, in those matters which do not immediately relate to the subject of universal redemption ; and then we may, without much difficulty, apply such limitations as we shall find to the same phrases as they occur in those scriptures which are brought for the proof of universal redemption. Here we are to inquire into the meaning of those words which seem to denote the universality of the subject spoken of, in various instances which have no immediate reference to the doctrine of redemption.

As to the word 'all,' it is certain that it is often used when every individual is not intended by it. Thus we read that 'all the cattle of Egypt died,'<sup>r</sup> when the plague of murrain was inflicted on the beasts ; though, in the following words, it is said that 'none of the cattle of the children of Israel died ;' and though it appears also, that none of the Egyptians' cattle died save those 'in the field.'<sup>s</sup> It is plain that there was a great number of cattle which died not, which were reserved to be cut off by a following plague, namely, that of hail.<sup>t</sup> Moreover, it is said that the 'hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field ;'<sup>u</sup> yet we read of the locusts 'eating the residue of that which escaped, which remained unto them from the hail.'<sup>x</sup> Again, we read that 'all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears,'<sup>y</sup> of which Aaron made the calf which they worshipped ; though it is not probable that all wore ear-rings ; and it is certain that all did not join with those who committed the idolatry. The apostle intimates as much, when he speaks of 'some of them as being idolaters, who sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.'<sup>z</sup> Some conclude also, that those of the tribe of Levi, who 'gathered themselves unto Moses,' and joined with him in executing the vengeance of God on the idolaters, are said to be 'on the Lord's side,' not merely because they repented of their idolatry, but because they did not join with the rest in it. If this be the sense of the text, yet it does not appear that they were all exempted from the charge of idolatry, though it is said that 'all the sons of Levi were gathered to him.' For we read of every man's slaying his brother and his companion ;<sup>a</sup> and it is said, on this occasion, that they did not know their fathers, nor their children,<sup>b</sup> that is, they did not spare them ; so that some of the tribe of Levi, as well as the other tribes, joined in the idolatry, though they were all gathered to Moses, as

q See Whitty's Discourse, &c. page 113.

r Exod. ix. 6.

s Ver. 3.

t Ver. 19.

u Ver. 25.

x Chap. x. 5.

y Exod. xxxii. 3.

z 1 Cor. x. 7.

a Exod. xxxii. 27.

b Deut. xxxiii. 9.

being on the Lord's side. Again, where the prophet speaks concerning 'God's destroying Syria, and making Nineveh desolate,' we read that 'all the beasts of the nations shall lodge in the upper lintels of it.'<sup>c</sup> By this language he means that those beasts which generally lodge in the wilderness, or in places remote from cities, such as the cormorant and bittern, &c., should take up their residence in those places which were formerly inhabited by the Ninevites; so that 'all the beasts' cannot be supposed to signify all that were in all parts of the world. Again, the prophet Isaiah, when speaking of the multitude who should 'come to the mountain of the Lord's house,' which he expresses by 'all nations coming unto it,' explains 'all nations coming to it,' to mean, that 'many people should say, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.'<sup>d</sup> The prophet Micah, also, referring to the same thing, says, 'Many nations shall say, Let us go up to it;'<sup>e</sup> as uttering a prediction of what was to be fulfilled in the gospel-day, in those who, out of various nations, adhered to the true religion. Again, it is said, that 'the fame of David went out into all lands;'<sup>f</sup> which cannot be meant of those lands which were far remote, but of those that were round about Judea. Moreover, it is said, that 'Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to John, and were baptized of him;'<sup>g</sup> which cannot be understood in any other sense, but that a great number of them went out to him for that purpose. When, again, it is said, that 'all the people held John as a prophet,'<sup>h</sup> it is not to be supposed that the Scribes and Pharisees, and many others who cast contempt on him, held him to be so, but that there were a great many who so esteemed him. Likewise, when our Saviour says, 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake,'<sup>i</sup> it is certain that those who embraced Christianity are to be excluded from the number of those who hated them. Again, when it is said, that 'there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews out of every nation under heaven,'<sup>k</sup> it is not to be supposed that there were Jews residing in every nation, who resorted to Jerusalem. Referring to this text, a learned writer<sup>l</sup> puts this question, Were there any who resorted thither from England or Scotland? Again, we read, that John's disciples came to him; complaining that Jesus baptized, 'and all men came to him;'<sup>m</sup> by which nothing more is to be understood than that many among the Jews attended on his ministry, and were by far the smaller part of that nation. From these and many other scriptures which might be brought to the same purpose, it appears that the word 'all,' sometimes denotes not every individual, but a part of mankind.

Let us now consider the sense in which we are to understand 'the world,' or 'all the world.' It will appear, that only a small part of the world is, in many scriptures, meant by these phrases. Thus the Pharisees said, on occasion of a number of the Jews following our Saviour, 'The world is gone after him.'<sup>n</sup> How small a part of the world was the Jewish nation! and how small a part of the Jewish nation attended on our Saviour's ministry! Yet this is called 'the world.' Again, it is said, 'There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed;'<sup>o</sup> by which nothing more is meant than those countries which were subjected to the Roman empire. Further, it is said, 'These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also;'<sup>p</sup> which cannot be meant to refer to any other parts of the world than those in which the apostles had exercised their ministry. Again, when the apostle tells the Romans that 'their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world,'<sup>q</sup> he means only those other churches that were planted in several parts of the world. Moreover, it is said, that 'Agabus signified, by the Spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world;'<sup>r</sup> by which nothing is meant but all adjacent countries. In the same sense is the passage to be understood, 'All countries came into Egypt to buy corn, because the famine was so sore in all lands,'<sup>s</sup> that is, in the parts adjacent to Egypt. Thus we have sufficient ground to conclude, that 'all men,' 'the world,' and 'all the world,' are often taken for a small part of mankind.

c Zeph. ii. 14.

g Matt. iii. 5, 6.

l Vid. Erasm. in loc.

p Acts xvii. 6.

d Isa. ii. 3.

h Matt. xxi. 26.

m John iii. 26.

q Rom. i. 8.

e Mic. iv. 2.

i Matt. x. 22.

n John xiii. 19.

r Acts xi. 28.

f 1 Chron. xiv. 17.

k Acts ii. 5.

o Luke ii. 1.

s Gen. xli. 57.



That we may be a little more particular in considering the various limitations these words are subject to in scripture, as well as in our common modes of speaking, let it be observed, that sometimes nothing is intended by 'all men,' but all sorts of men, without distinction of sex, nation, estate, quality, and condition of men in the world. Thus the apostle says, 'I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.'<sup>t</sup> This he immediately explains as including men of all ranks and characters: 'To the Jews, I became a Jew; to them that were under the law, as under the law; to them that were without law, as without law; to the weak, I became weak; I became all things to all men, that by any means I might gain some.'—Again, sometimes the word 'all' or 'the world,' is taken for the Gentiles, in opposition to the Jews. Thus the apostle says, 'Now if the fall of them,' that is, the Jews, 'be the riches of the world,' that is, of the Gentiles, as he explains it in the following words, 'and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?'<sup>u</sup> He says also, 'God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all.'<sup>x</sup>—Further, 'the world' is sometimes taken for those who do not believe, in opposition to the church. Thus it is said, 'All the world wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon.'<sup>y</sup> This is explained by the context, where it is said that 'all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.'<sup>z</sup> In another passage, it is said, 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness,'<sup>a</sup> or, as some render it,<sup>b</sup> 'in the wicked one,' as being subject to Satan; but the church is exempted from that charge, notwithstanding the universality of the expression.—Again, sometimes the word 'all' is limited by the nature of the thing spoken of, which is very easy to be understood, though not expressed. Thus the apostle exhorts 'servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things;'<sup>c</sup> which must certainly be understood as meaning all things just, and not contrary to the laws of God or the civil laws of the land in which they live.—Further, the word 'all' is often used, not only in scripture, but in our common modes of speaking, to signify those only who are the objects of that thing which is said to be done for them; and then the emphasis is laid on the action, or the person who performs it. When we say, for example, that all malefactors under a sentence of death are to be pardoned by the king, we mean nothing else but that all who are pardoned receive their pardon from him. Or when we say that virtue renders all men happy, and vice miserable, we mean that all who are virtuous are happy, and all who are vicious miserable; not that virtue, abstracted from the exercise of it, makes any happy, or vice miserable. In this case, the word 'all' is taken, not for every individual person, but for those only who are either good or bad. Now this corresponds with the scripture-mode of speaking; as when it is said, 'Drowsiness shall clothe a man,' or every man, 'with rags,'<sup>d</sup> or, sloth reduces all to poverty,—not all mankind, but all who are addicted to this vice. Moreover, it is said, 'The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.'<sup>e</sup> This is not to be understood, as if God kept all mankind from falling, or raised every individual person who is bowed down, so as not to suffer him to sink under his burden; but it means that all who are upheld, or raised up, when bowed down, are made partakers of this privilege by the Lord alone.

Having shown in what sense the words 'all' and 'all the world,' are frequently used in scripture, when not applied to the doctrine of redemption, we shall now consider the application of them to it, whereby it may appear, that those scriptures which are generally brought in defence of the doctrine of universal redemption, do not tend to support it, or to overthrow the contrary doctrine which we are maintaining.

The first scripture which is often referred to for that purpose, is 1 John ii. 2, in which it is said, concerning our Saviour, that 'he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' For understanding this, we must consider that it is more than probable that the apostle writes this

t 1 Cor. ix. 19.

u Rom. xi. 12.

x Ver. 32. Συνεκλείει γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς

ἀπὸ θανάτου, ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλθῇ.

y Rev. xiii. 3. 4.

z Ver. 8.

a 1 John v. 19.

b ἐν τῇ ποιήσῃ

c Tit. i. 9.

d Prov. xxiii. 21.

e Psal. cxlv. 14.

epistle to the converted Jews, scattered through various countries in Asia, as Peter is said to do,<sup>f</sup> and James.<sup>g</sup> For this reason they are called 'general epistles,' as likewise this of John is; inasmuch as they are not addressed to particular churches among the Gentiles, converted to the faith, as most of the apostle Paul's are. Now, it is plain, that in the scripture just mentioned, when these believing Jews are given to understand that Christ is 'a propitiation for their sins, and not for theirs only, but for the sins of the whole world,' the meaning is, not for their sins only who were Jews, but for the sins of the believing Gentiles, or those who were converted by the ministry of the apostle Paul, who is called 'the apostle of the Gentiles.' This has been already shown to be the meaning of the word 'world,' in many scriptures. Hence, the sense is, that the saving effects of Christ's death redound to all who believe, throughout the world, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Another scripture generally brought to prove universal redemption, is Heb. ii. 9, 'That he,' namely Christ, 'by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.' For understanding this statement, we must have recourse to the words immediately following, which are plainly an illustration of it. They for whom Christ tasted death, are styled 'many sons,' who are to be 'brought to glory.' In order to this, 'Christ, the Captain of their salvation, was made perfect through sufferings.' This is said as an explanation of his being 'crowned with glory and honour, for the suffering of death;' and it plainly proves that it was for these only that he tasted death, and that by 'every man' for whom he tasted it, is meant every one of his sons, or of those who are described as 'sanctified,' 'whom he is not ashamed to call brethren,'<sup>h</sup> and who are farther styled, 'the children which God had given him.'<sup>i</sup> As this sense of the words, then, is so agreeable to the context, which asserts the doctrine of particular redemption, it cannot reasonably be supposed that they are to be understood in a sense which has a tendency to overthrow that doctrine, or to prove that Christ died equally and alike for all men.

Another scripture brought for the same purpose, is 1 Cor. xv. 22, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' But the apostle is not speaking directly concerning redemption in this text, but concerning the resurrection of the dead; and, if it be understood of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, no one can suppose that every individual of mankind shall be made partaker of this blessing. This is obvious also, from what is said in the verse immediately following, where they who are said to be 'made alive in Christ,' are described as persons in whom he has a special propriety, 'Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.' The meaning, therefore, is only this, that all of those who shall be raised up in glory, shall obtain this privilege by Christ, whose resurrection was the first-fruits of it. I am sensible that the reason of quoting this scripture to prove universal redemption, is principally the opposition which there seems to be between the death of all mankind in Adam, and the life which is obtained by Christ. It is hence supposed that the happiness which we enjoy by him, is of equal extent with the misery we sustained by the fall of Adam. But if this were the sense of the text, it must prove an universal salvation, and not merely the possibility of it; for the apostle is speaking of a privilege which should be conferred in the end of time, and not of that which we enjoy under the gospel-dispensation. Accordingly, the passage does not in the least answer the end for which the advocates of universal redemption quote it.

The next scripture by which it is supposed that universal redemption may be defended, is Rom. v. 18, 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' For understanding this scripture, let it be considered that the blessing which is said to extend to 'all,' is no less than justification of life, and not merely a possibility of attaining salvation. In the foregoing verse, they who are interested in this privilege, are said to 'receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness,' and to 'reign in life by Jesus Christ.' Now, certainly this privilege is too great to be applied to the whole world. Indeed that which the apostle, in this verse, considers as being 'upon all men unto justification of life,' he



explains when he says, 'Many shall be made righteous.' Hence 'the free gift, which came upon all men unto justification,' means nothing else but that a select number, who are said to be many, or the whole multitude of those who do or shall believe, shall be made righteous.

It may be objected to this sense of the text, that there is an opposition between that 'judgment which came by the offence of one,' that is Adam, 'upon all men, unto condemnation,' and that 'righteousness, which came upon all men, unto justification;' and that, therefore, 'all men' must be taken in the same sense in both parts of the verse, and consequently must be extended to all the world. But it is not necessary, or reasonable, to suppose that these terms of opposition have any respect to the universal extent of condemnation and justification. The apostle's design is, not to compare the number of those who shall be justified with that of those who were condemned by the fall of Adam, but to compare the two heads together, Adam and Christ, and to show that, as we are liable to condemnation by the one, so we obtain the gift of righteousness by the other. This is plainly the apostle's method of reasoning, agreeable to the whole scope of the chapter, as may easily be observed by those who compare these words with several foregoing verses.

There is another scripture brought to prove universal redemption, 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.'<sup>k</sup> It is supposed that the apostle is here proving that all mankind are dead in sin; that the medium by which he proves it is, Christ's dying for all men, so that the remedy is as extensive as the disease; and that, therefore, the passage is an undeniable proof of universal redemption. But this is not a true representation of the apostle's reasoning; for he designs to prove, not that all were dead in sin, but that they were dead to it. That this may appear, let us consider the connection of this text with what goes before. The apostle speaks of them, in the foregoing verses, as having assurance of their future salvation, as 'groaning to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven,' and as having 'the first-fruits of the Spirit;' and he says that the apostles were 'made manifest in their consciences,' that is, they had something in their own consciences which evinced the success of their ministry to them, on which account they 'had occasion to glory on their behalf.' All these expressions denote them to have been in a converted state. The apostle adds, 'Whether we be beside ourselves, or whether we be sober,'<sup>l</sup> that is, whether we have a greater or less degree of fervency in preaching the gospel, 'it is for God,' that is, for his glory, 'and for your cause; for the love of Christ,' that is, either his love to us, or our love to him, 'constraineth us' to this, 'because we thus judge, that if one,' namely, Christ, 'died for all,' that is, for you all, 'then were all dead,' or you all 'are dead,' that is, not dead in sin, but made partakers of that communion which believers have with Christ in his death, whereby they are said to be dead to sin and to the world; and the result is, that they are obliged 'to live not unto themselves, but to Christ.' This interpretation seems more agreeable to the design of the apostle, than to suppose that he intends only to prove the fall of man from his being recovered by Christ. There is no appearance of any similar argument in any other part of the apostle's writings; but our being dead to sin, as the consequence of Christ's death, is what he often mentions, and, indeed, it seems to be one of his peculiar phrases. Thus he speaks of believers, as being 'dead to sin,'<sup>m</sup> and 'dead with Christ.'<sup>n</sup> Elsewhere also he says, 'Ye are dead';<sup>o</sup> that is, you have communion with Christ in his death, or are dead unto sin. He speaks likewise of their being 'dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world';<sup>p</sup> that is, if you have communion with Christ in his death, you are obliged not to observe the ceremonial law, which is called 'the rudiments of the world.' In several other places, he speaks of believers being crucified, dead, buried, and risen from the dead, as having communion with Christ in his death and resurrection, or being made partakers of those benefits which he procured thereby. If, then, this be the apostle's frequent mode of speaking, why may we not suppose, that, in the passage under present consideration, he argues, that because 'Christ

<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.<sup>l</sup> 1 Ver. 13.<sup>m</sup> Rom. vi. 2.<sup>n</sup> Ver. 8.<sup>o</sup> Col. iii. 3.<sup>p</sup> Col. ii. 20.

died for them all, they were,' or they are 'all dead,'<sup>q</sup> and that, being thus dead, they are obliged, as he observes, 'not to live to themselves, but to Christ, that died for them,' and thereby procured this privilege of which they are made partakers? If this sense of the text be but allowed to be equally probable with the other, it will so far weaken the force of the argument we have been considering, that it will not appear, from this scripture, that Christ died for all men.

Universal redemption is attempted to be proved from John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' But, if we understand 'the world' as taken for the Gentiles, as it often is in scripture, the sense of the text seems to be such as is not inconsistent with special redemption, namely, that the love of God, which was expressed in sending his Son to die for those whom he designed to redeem, is of a much larger extent, as to the objects of it, than it was in former ages; for it includes not only those who believe among the Jews, but whosoever believes in him, throughout the world. Not that their believing in him is the foundation, or cause, but the effect of his love, and is to be considered as the character of the persons, who are the objects of that love. In this sense, also, we are to understand another scripture, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!'<sup>r</sup> that is, of all those, throughout the world, whose sins are expiated by his death.

The doctrine of universal redemption is farther maintained, from our Saviour's words in John vi. 33, 'The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;' which are explained in ver. 51, 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' But it does not appear that Christ here means that his death was a price of redemption paid for all mankind. He speaks of the application of redemption, which is expressed by his giving life; and not merely of his procuring a possibility of its being attained. They to whom he gives this privilege, are described as applying it to themselves by faith; which is, doubtless, the meaning of that metaphorical expression in which persons are said to 'eat of this bread,' or 'his flesh.' Hence, the meaning of this scripture is, that the death of Christ is appointed as the great means whereby all men, throughout the world, who apply it by faith, should attain eternal life. But this cannot be said of all without exception; so that it does not appear from this text, that Christ's death was designed to procure life for the whole world.

There is another scripture, brought to the same purpose, in Matt. xviii. 11, 'The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.' They who adduce the text suppose that it means all who were lost; and they infer that, as the whole world was brought into a lost state by the fall, Christ came to save them. The whole stress of this argument is laid on the sense they give of the Greek word<sup>s</sup> which we render, 'that which was lost,' whereby they understand every one that was lost. All that it denotes, however, is, that salvation supposes those who have an interest in it to have been in a lost state. Indeed, the text does not seem immediately to respect the purchase of redemption or salvation, by Christ's shedding his blood as a Priest, but the application of it, in effectually calling and thereby saving lost sinners. This is immediately afterwards illustrated by the parable of the lost sheep, which the shepherd brings back to the fold. On this account he says, 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.' This farther appears from our Saviour, on occasion of his converting Zaccheus, and telling him that 'salvation was come to his house,' having used the same mode of speaking, with the addition that 'he came to seek, as well as to save'<sup>t</sup> them. It also agrees well with the prediction relating to Christ's executing his prophetic office, in the salvation of his people, as being their Shepherd; in which he is repre-

<sup>q</sup> It may be observed, that, as in the scriptures before mentioned, the same word, ἀπθανον, is used in the same tense, namely, the second aorist, which our translators think fit to render in the present tense; and therefore it may as well be rendered here in the present tense, and so the meaning is, You all, for whom Christ died, are dead.

<sup>r</sup> John i. 29.

<sup>s</sup> Το ἀπολωλος.

<sup>t</sup> Luke xix. 9, 10.



sented as saying, 'I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away; and I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.'<sup>u</sup> Moreover, the parable of the lost sheep which Christ recovered, appears, by its connection with the preceding verses, to have a particular respect to those 'little' or humble 'ones' who believe in him, who went astray by reason of some offences which were cast in their way. Hence, when he had denounced a threatening against those who should offend any of them, and had cautioned the world that they should not do this by despising them,<sup>x</sup> he supposes this treatment would cause some of them to go astray, and then adds, that one of his ends of coming into the world, was to seek, to save, and to recover them.

Universal redemption is farther argued from the universality of divine grace. Accordingly, that text is often referred to, 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.'<sup>y</sup> But this seems very remote from the sense of the Holy Ghost, in these words. By 'the grace of God' is meant the gospel, which brings the glad tidings of salvation; and its 'appearing to all men,' signifies its being preached to the Gentiles. Or, suppose that by 'the grace of God,' we understand the display of his grace in the work of redemption, it is not said that it was designed for or applied to all men, but only that the publication of it is more general than it had formerly been. When the apostle afterwards speaks more particularly concerning redemption, he alters his mode of expression, and considers it with its just limitation, with respect to its objects. 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'<sup>z</sup>

We shall add but one scripture more, which is brought in defence of universal redemption. It is that in which the apostle speaks of God as 'the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.'<sup>a</sup> Here universal redemption is not asserted in the same sense in which the advocates of that doctrine maintain it, namely, that God hath brought all men into a salvable state, so that they may be saved if they will. But the meaning is, that 'God is the Saviour of all men,' that is, his common bounty extends itself to all, as the psalmist observes, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;'<sup>b</sup> but that he is more 'especially' the Saviour of 'them that believe,' inasmuch as they are interested in the special benefits purchased by his redemption, and are said to be 'saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.'<sup>c</sup>

There are several other scriptures brought to prove universal redemption, as when it is said, 'God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth';<sup>d</sup> and, 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'<sup>e</sup> But as these have been already considered,<sup>f</sup> we shall pass them over at present. There are also some scriptures whence it is argued that Christ died for all, because he died for some who shall perish. Thus the apostle speaks of some 'false teachers, who denied the Lord that bought them';<sup>g</sup> again he says, 'Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died';<sup>h</sup> and he speaks of a person who 'counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing.'<sup>i</sup> But these, and some other scriptures to the same purpose, we reserve to be considered in a following Answer,<sup>k</sup> in which the doctrine of the saints' perseverance is defended.

We have thus treated of the first branch of Christ's priestly office, consisting in his offering himself a sacrifice, without spot to God; and have spoken of the persons for whom this was done. We should now proceed to consider the second branch, of his priestly office, consisting in his making continual intercession for those for whom he offered up himself. But, this being particularly insisted on in a following Answer,<sup>l</sup> we shall pass it over at present, and proceed to consider the execution of his kingly office.

<sup>u</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 10.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 9.

examined,' under Quest. xii. xiii.

<sup>k</sup> See Quest. lxxix.

<sup>x</sup> Matt. xviii. 6, 10.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. cxlv. 9.

<sup>f</sup> See Sect. 'Arguments for the opposite doctrine to that of Election

<sup>g</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Tit. ii. 11.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. xlv. 17.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. xiv. 15.

<sup>l</sup> See Quest. lv.

<sup>z</sup> Verse 14.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

that of Election

<sup>i</sup> Heb. x. 29.

[NOTE 3 M. *The Difficulty connected with the Doctrines which relate to the Order of Christ's Priesthood.*—The apostle does not say, as Dr. Ridgeley implies, that the doctrines which relate to the order of Christ's priesthood, are in themselves difficult to be explained. He, on the contrary, classes them with all the doctrines of revelation which are only a degree more difficult than 'the first principles of the oracles of God.' The difficulty of which he speaks arose, in no degree from the doctrines themselves, but altogether from the stupidity, inaptitude, disinclination to learn, and immaturity in knowledge, of the Hebrews to whom he wrote. They were 'dull of hearing'; so that he could with difficulty utter sounds so loud as should penetrate their ears: they were 'such as had need of milk and not of strong meat,' so that he felt difficulty to attempt to feed them with any, but the most elementary truths of revelation: they were unskilful in the word of righteousness; so that he could not easily convey to them lessons which belonged to persons who had had 'their senses exercised' to discriminate, and had attained in a measure 'the assurance of the riches of understanding.' Exactly the difficulty which he encountered in explaining to the Hebrews the order of Christ's priesthood, would have confronted him in explaining to them the greater portion of the doctrines of the new economy. We are not, therefore, to infer from what he says that there is a greater hindrance in the way of our understanding how Christ is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, than there is in the way of our understanding how he makes intercession, how he rules his people, or how, in general, he conducts his mediatorial administration. —ED.]

[NOTE 3 N. *Melchizedek was not Christ.*—The only arguments of apparent weight which Dr. Ridgeley adduces in support of the opinion that Melchizedek was Christ, are his titles, his having been without father, mother, descent, beginning of days or end of life, and its having been 'witnessed of him that he liveth.' But these arguments lose all plausibility the moment we look at the fact that he is spoken of not personally, but officially.—not absolutely, but as a Priest. The scriptures say not a word respecting him except in his official or priestly capacity. Even our Lord, as incarnate and as enthroned at the right hand of the divine Majesty, when called 'a priest after the order of Melchizedek,' is spoken of strictly as a priest, to the exclusion of all other views of his person or character. Some things are said of him—particularly that he was without genealogy or pedigree—which are expressly explained to refer to him only as priest. View him as the King of his people, as the Messiah promised to the Old Testament church, and you see his pedigree, according to the flesh, minutely recorded by inspiration, and carefully traced to David and to Isaac; and only when you view him as a priest, as unconnected with the tribe of Levi, as unenrolled in the records of the current priesthood of the Old Testament church, do you find him to have been 'without genealogy.' So it is with Melchizedek. Had information of every description been furnished us respecting him either personally, or as king of Salem, or in any other capacity than that of priest, it would have failed to throw one ray of light on that phasis of character in regard to which Christ is after his order.

As a priest, then, and only as a priest, was Melchizedek 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.' In his priestly office, he stood alone, unconnected with either a predecessor or a successor. His priesthood was not transmitted to him from a former officiate; it did not rest on ancestral connexion with any party who had formerly held it; it was not vindicated by appeal to any genealogical record; it was not held by a tenure of transference from one officiate to another; it began and was conducted throughout in ministrations performed only by himself. He was the only priest of the dispensation to which he belonged. His business was to officiate, not for the children of Ham, not for the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, not for his own political subjects or the members of his patriarchal family, but for Abraham, the friend of God, and not even for him as a private individual, but only as 'the father of the faithful,' the typical head of all who believe in the promised seed, the Saviour of the world. He is noticed as a priest, or is called so, in no other connexion, with no other allusion, with reference to no other act, than as officiating once for Abraham. We are not directly told even of his having offered sacrifice: we are told only of his having once taken tithes of Abraham, and having once blessed him in the name of the Most High. But as tithes were the award of officiating as a sacrificer, and as a priestly benediction could not be pronounced except as the result of making atonement, we infer that he did offer sacrifice. This, however, he appears to have done only once. Officiating for Abraham as the typical representative of spiritual Israel, he did not need to minister for him often, or even twice. All the purposes of his peculiar priesthood were accomplished on the single occasion narrated in scripture, when he met the father of the faithful returning from the slaughter of the kings, 'and blessed him that had the promises.' He thus had 'neither beginning of days nor end of life, but abideth a priest continually.' He was a priest before any work of the dispensation to which he belonged was performed; he continued to be a priest after all that work was completed; and consequently it is witnessed concerning him as a priest 'that he liveth.' Dr. Ridgeley's arguments, then,—founded on his supposed eternity—assume utterly mistaken views of his character: they look away from him as a priest, and contemplate him in his abstract or personal capacity; and the moment they are tested by an appeal to what Melchizedek was officially—to what he was in the only sense in which the scriptures describe him—they prove to be inconclusive and unmeaning. Let us now glance at two or three arguments opposed to Dr. Ridgeley's position.

1. That Melchizedek was not Christ, appears from the fact that manhood is essential to the priestly character. 'Every High Priest is taken from among men,' Heb. v. 1. 'Wherefore in all things it behoved Christ to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people,' Heb. ii. 17. This language unequivocally teaches that every priest is a man—that the Son of God could become a priest only by assuming human nature. Nor must the priest who acts morally for mankind, have merely such a semblance of manhood as may simply be visible to spectators: he must be 'compassed with infirmity,' (Heb. v. 3.) subjected to trials which will produce in him experimental sympathy with his suffering constituents, (Heb. ii. 18.) and placed in such an obediential rela-



tion to the divine law that he shall be 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26. Now, experience of pain, compassment with infirmity, and subordination to the divine law, are compatible only with real manhood. To say, then, that Christ personally officiated as a priest to Abraham, or that he and Melchizedek were the same person, is just to affirm that he had then as truly assumed human nature as he afterwards did at the commencement of the Christian dispensation.

Strangely enough, Dr. Ridgeley appears willing to adopt this inference. In discussing the present question, indeed, he uses no stronger language than 'the appearances of Christ in the form of a man,' and even that phrase he employs only once; but, in a former part of his work, when treating of the reality of Christ's human nature, (See under Quest. xxxvi.) he says, respecting his visible appearances under the Old Testament dispensation, 'Whether there was, in every one of those instances, a real human body that appeared, *though in some of them it is beyond dispute that there was*, I will not pretend to determine.' As he offers no proof of this extraordinary position, I cannot imagine to what he refers as placing the matter 'beyond dispute,' or even as rendering it in any degree plausible, except perhaps the events of our Lord's appearing, along with two created angels, to Abraham, on the eve of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But it is quite a sufficient refutation of any inferences which might be drawn from a hasty or superficial view of these events, to remark that if they prove the presence of 'a real human body' on the part of our Lord, they also prove the presence of real human bodies on the part of the created angels. Explain the phenomena of our Lord's preincarnate appearances how we may, our business is to attend, as to both the objects and the date of his assuming 'a real human body,' to the explicit statements of scripture. Now, what statements can be more explicit than those which describe his manhood to be of 'the seed of David,' which declare it to have been 'conceived of a Virgin,' and 'born of woman,' which connect the assumption of it with a design to offer sacrifice, to destroy death and him that had the power of it, to endure all the sinless infirmities of our nature and become perfect through sufferings, and which identify the date of our Lord's appearing in it with 'the fulness of time,' with the tested and confessed inefficiency of the rites of the ceremonial law, with the setting up of the spiritual and enduring ordinances of the Christian dispensation? Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8; Isa. vii. 14; Luke i. 31; Gal. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 3; 1 John iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14, 17, 18, 10; Gal. iv. 4; Heb. x. 5—7; Isa. ix. 6, 7. It follows, then, that Christ did not assume manhood previous to the Christian era; and that, as he then wanted this essential requisite to the priestly character, he was not the person who, under the name of Melchizedek, officiated for Abraham.

2. That Melchizedek was not Christ, appears from the fact that our Lord, previous to his incarnation, had not the materials of atonement and intercession. 'Every High Priest,' says Paul, 'is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this priest also,' the Lord Jesus Christ, 'have somewhat to offer,' Heb. viii. 3. The word 'man' in our authorized version of this text is supplementary; and evidently ought to be 'high priest.' The word *αὐτοῦ* in the clause, *ἔδωκεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τούτου ὁ προσεγγίζων*, can take only the word *ἀρχιερεὺς* in the first verse as its antecedent. Paul says this for the express purpose of showing that Christ, as our high priest, has, and necessarily must have had, the materials of atonement and intercession. Nor might these materials be only such as were of a shadowy or prefigurative nature: they were, as the scope of the apostle's argument demonstrates, the materials of that atonement which was made once for all on account of sin, and of that intercession which is conducted in 'the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man,' (Verse 2.) and which ever prevails with God for his people. This atonement, this intercession, are Christ's priestly work; they are embodied in every idea which the scriptures exhibit of his priestly ministrations; and both rest on his incarnation, on the union of the divine and the human natures in his mediatorial person, on his having 'appeared once for all in the end of the world'—in the end of the Mosaic dispensation—'to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' What follows, then, but that he was not Melchizedek,—the person who externally officiated as a priest to the father of the faithful?

3. That Melchizedek was not Christ, appears from the fact that our Lord's call to his priestly office was not given him till his incarnation. 'No man,' says the apostle, 'taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee; as he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,' Heb. v. 4—6. This is the only call which the word of God represents our Lord to have received. Nor indeed could the call have been otherwise than unique and once for all; for 'the word of the oath,' with which it was accompanied, 'consecrated him for evermore,' Heb. vii. 27. It was with this oath that he was 'made a priest,'—(Heb. vii. 20, 21.) an oath which could not be revoked,—a communication of which Jehovah could not repent,—an instrument of consecration which could not be employed more than once. Now, though 'the word of the oath,' was, as regarded the divine purpose, spoken in eternity; though it was also, as a matter of revelation, recorded by inspiration in the writings of David; yet, as constituting Christ's call to the priestly office—as the instrument with which he was 'made a priest'—it was 'since the law,' (Heb. vii. 28.) or at the period of the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation. As Christ, then, did not till that period receive his call to be a priest—in other words, as he was not till then consecrated to minister or act as a priest—he and Melchizedek could not have been the same person.

4. That Melchizedek was not Christ, appears from the fact that all priestly ministrations prior to the Christian era contemplated our Lord's priestly work as future. Aaron and his successors were special and divinely appointed types of Christ's priestly character. They and their services were 'shadows of good things to come.' Both they and the persons for whom they ministered, believed on scriptural grounds that the priest was yet to 'arise' whose character they typified. All the acts of their priesthood, all the moral lessons of their services, all the institutions of the economy

under which they served, looked forward to an efficient high priest for men under the name of 'he that cometh.' Is it to be thought, then, that, after all, the whole *pre*-figuration was a *post*-figuration,—that, notwithstanding the pervading and essential idea of 'things to come,' Christ had previously made priestly appearances, and had actually performed priestly work? Yet he must have made these appearances, he must have performed that work, he must have been, not so much 'he who cometh,' as he who *had come*, if Melchizedek and he were the same person.

Besides, the ministrations of Melchizedek himself were of a typical or prefigurative character, and, in consequence, could not be the ministrations of our Lord. They were of the same 'carnal' or 'shadowy' nature as those of either the patriarchal or the Levitical priests. As regarded the 'gifts' or the offerings of thanksgiving, they consisted in 'bringing forth bread and wine;' and as regarded sacrifice, they may be inferred, from unity of character, from the circumstances of the age, from the relative position of Melchizedek and Abraham, and from the asserted and admitted absence of all moral sacrifice previous to 'the offering of the body of Jesus once for all,' to have consisted in the religious slaying of a lamb or of some other of the inferior animals. Ministrations of such a character, no matter who performed them, were essentially or necessarily prefigurative,—quite as much so as those of Abel, Noah, or Aaron. Are we to believe, then, that, while they were types of Christ's work, they were a part of that work itself,—that, while only prefigurations of his priestly performances, they were actually his own performances as priest? Yet this palpable contradiction is, in effect, the same thing as to say that Melchizedek was Christ. Nor will the acerbity of the contradiction be sweetened by alleging, as Dr. Ridgeley does, that the appearances of Christ under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations were 'prelibations' of his incarnation, and that prelibation and type or prefiguration are words of similar import. Christ's preincarnate appearances were good things present—not 'shadows of good things to come;' they were immediate and effective manifestations of divine agency, adapted to the existing condition of the church; they were not institutions set up by God or acts performed by man solely to carry the church's faith forward to sayings and doings of the Messiah yet future, but were direct ministrations of the Son of God himself, as immediately fitted to the circumstances of the patriarchal and Mosaic ages, as those of the period of his humiliation were to the circumstances of his redemptional ministry. So far, too, as there was a human form in his preincarnate appearances, it was a form only, and not a real human nature; and it seemed to hold just such a relation to the reality of his future manhood, as the cloud of glory, or Schechinah, held to the display in his mediatorial person of 'the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' Such were the appearances of the Son of God which scholastic writers call 'prelibations.' But who—if he reflect on their nature, or even glance at their moral grandeur—will venture to think of them as types, or as possessed in any sense of typical import? Types, as compared with what they prefigured, were all 'shadows,' 'weak and unprofitable things,' 'carnal ordinances,' 'beggarly elements,' things which 'waxed old and were ready to vanish away.' But all the Son of God's appearances, all his ministrations, all his acts, whether in what are called his 'prelibations' or in any of his preincarnate agency whatever, were truly and necessarily divine. What follows, then, but that he and Melchizedek were not the same person?

5. That Melchizedek was not Christ, appears from the fact that they are described as different persons. 'It is yet far more evident,' says Paul, 'that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,' Heb. vii. 15. Dr. Ridgeley confesses that this text bears strongly against his theory; but tries to show that it calls Christ 'another priest' as distinguished, not from Melchizedek, but from the priests of the order of Aaron. It is evident, however, that Christ is 'another priest' as distinguished from all priests whatever, and in particular, from all whom the apostle had mentioned, Melchizedek as well as the Levites. As another priest, he is said to 'arise,'—phraseology which implies that his appearance in the priestly character was new, or had been hitherto unknown. Melchizedek had already appeared as a priest; the Levites had long ministered at the altar; and now there 'arose' a new and 'another priest,' different in nature from the latter, and 'made after the similitude' of the former.

The word rendered 'similitude,' (*ὁμοιωσις*), means a model as distinguished from a copy, a pattern as distinguished from an imitation, or any object of resemblance as distinguished from the object which resembles it. Paul elsewhere uses it to denote similitude between Christ and his people in subjection to suffering. 'We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tried after the similitude of us,' (*καθ' ὁμοιωσιν*), yet without sin,' Heb. iv. 15. Just as, in his exposure to pain, he bore our image; so, in his sustaining the priestly character, did he bear the image of Melchizedek. The same relation exists between him and us in regard to mode of suffering, as that which existed between him and Melchizedek in respect to the order of priesthood. Hence, if his being a priest after the similitude of Melchizedek, means that he was Melchizedek himself: his having been, as a sufferer, after the similitude of men, must mean that Christ and mankind are the same—that Jesus and men are names of interchangeable import. Such an inference is as unavoidable as it is absurd, and exposes the utter fallacy of the notion whence it is deduced. Christ, as a sufferer, having been tried after the similitude of men, proves that he and any mere man are different and distinct beings; and his having, as a priest, been made after the similitude of Melchizedek, proves in the same way, that he and the king of Salem could not have been the same person. Christ was 'another' priest who arose after his order.

Again, Melchizedek is said to have been 'made like unto the Son of God,'—language which equally proves that he could not himself have been the Saviour, Heb. vii. 3. The verb translated 'made like unto,' (*ἀφομοιωσας*), refers, like the noun rendered 'similitude,' to one object as the model, pattern, or exemplar of another. The leading sense of it, however, is likeness, or resemblance in the way of imitation or comparison. As it occurs in this text, indeed, it is intensive, having in composition with it a particle which adds to its strength; yet, as to its radical signification, it is of



the same import as when it occurs in its simple form. Let us look, then, at some of the passages in which it is found, and see how it will there bear the meaning of identification. 'And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God, and with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed.' 'Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock.' 'Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented?' Mark iv. 30, 31; Matt. vii. 24; Matt. xi. 16, 17. After reading these passages, is it still thought that Melchizedek's having been 'made like unto the Son of God,' means that he was the Son of God? If so, we must, on the same grounds, believe such remarkable doctrines as these:—the kingdom of God is a grain of mustard seed; the man who does Christ's sayings is an architect who builds his houses on good foundations; the whole adult population of Judea who lived during the period of our Lord's public ministry, were children who amused themselves in the market-places, and piped and chanted to their playmates.—ED.]

[NOTE 3 O. *The Peculiarities of Melchizedek's Order of Priesthood.*—The distinguishing properties of Melchizedek's order of priesthood, those in which it differed from the Aaronic order, and peculiarly typified or exhibited the priestly character of Christ, are deserving of special notice; and as they are only hinted at by Dr. Ridgeley, they may profitably form the subject of a short note. They appear to me to be chiefly five,—perfection, supremacy, perpetuity, intransferableness, and the mutual subserviency of kingly and priestly functions.

1. One peculiarity of Melchizedek's order of priesthood is perfection. Melchizedek 'blessed him that had the promises;' he officiated for Abraham as 'the father of the faithful,' or as the typical representative of all the redeemed; and he ministered on his behalf only once, or 'once for all.' There are three proofs that Abraham as a public head was his only constituent. The first is the passage, 'He received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises; and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater,' Heb. vii. 6, 7. Why should the patriarch, in reference to his transaction with Melchizedek, be so pointedly called 'he that had the promises,' unless he sustained in that transaction, not a personal or private capacity, not a capacity in common with any other individuals, but the peculiar character of 'the father of the faithful?' Besides, as the economical representative of all the Israelites, and the typical representative of all the redeemed, he was the greatest human personage known to the Jewish church. 'Art thou greater than our father Abraham?' asked the Jews of Christ, 'Whom makest thou thyself to be?' Yet Paul asserts him to have been inferior to Melchizedek; for 'without all contradiction,' says he, 'the less is blessed of the greater.' But had Abraham been only one of many for whom Melchizedek ministered, or had he been blessed by him in his personal or private capacity, he could claim to be a patriarchal priest as truly as he, and he would, at the same time, have been superior to him as the holder of the promises. It follows, then, that as in receiving the blessing, he was less than Melchizedek, he must have stood in the capacity of the only constituent, and the representative of Israel. The second proof of this point is the passage, 'As I may say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.' Here, Abraham is distinctly asserted to have acted with Melchizedek, in a capacity which made all Levi, and by parity of reason, all the tribes and generations of Israel, participants in his conduct. Melchizedek officiated for the patriarch, not as an individual, but as representing all who were 'in his loins.' The third proof is the title given to Melchizedek, 'the priest of the Most High God.' There is an emphasis in this title which implies him to have differed as much from every priest of his day, and every priest who preceded him, as from the priests of the order of Aaron. Now, in what could any emphatic difference consist, except in his officiating for Abraham as the representative of all Israel? If he be viewed as simply the priest of a tribe of people or a district of country, he differed nothing from an ordinary patriarchal priest, or from any one of the numerous priests who preceded the institution of the Aaronic order. As 'priest of the Most High God,' too, he was 'without father, without mother, without descent,' he stood alone in his priesthood, he did not receive it from a predecessor, he was of another class, or of another order from the patriarchal priests; and he must consequently have received a special or peculiar call to the office which he filled, for 'no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,' Heb. v. 4. Not only his emphatic title, therefore, but his peculiar and distinguishing call, prove him to have officiated in a far other manner, and a far higher sense, than any patriarchal priest, or officiate for a tribe or for private individuals. From this consideration, then, as well as from those formerly stated, it follows that he ministered for Abraham in the latter's public capacity, of 'the father of the faithful.'

Now, as Abraham's character in the transaction was altogether typical, and had reference neither to his own personal conduct nor to that of the multitude whom he represented, but only to the relation in which they stood to the covenant of promise or the dispensation of mercy, there was no occasion for more than one priestly ministration. We accordingly read of Melchizedek officiating only once. He appears to have made an expiatory offering for Abraham, just as he brought forth to him bread and wine 'once for all.' Abraham, as 'he who had the promises,' was 'blessed' effectively and definitively by 'the priest of the Most High God,' when he was blessed 'once.' In his relation to the divine covenant, the covenant of peace and mercy, or rather as representing that relation on the part of all who are his children by faith, he needed to enjoy only one priestly ministration. All the work of Melchizedek's 'blessing' him was accomplished in one performance. Hence the perfection of his order of priesthood.

How beautiful a type is here of the uniqueness and efficiency of the priestly work of our Lord! He officiates in reality just in that relation in which Melchizedek officiated by prefiguration. Melchizedek ministered by a symbol for 'him who had the promises:' Christ ministered by the sacri-

fice of himself for all on whom the promises take effect. Melchizedek by one act 'blessed' the typical representative of the faithful: Christ 'by one offering, hath perfected for ever those for whom he made atonement,' Heb. x. 14. 'But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,' Heb. ix. 27, 28. 'For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself,' Heb. vii. 26, 27.

2. Another peculiarity of Melchizedek's order of priesthood is supremacy. 'Consider,' says the apostle, 'how great this priest was to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tithe of the spoils,' Heb. vii. 4. Aaronic priests, in connection with receiving a right to exact tithes, were raised to a far loftier and more sacred position than the Israelites of the other tribes, or than even the unpriested families of the Levites. Their investment with the right occasioned a murmuring among all the other classes of the people, Numb. xvi. 1—50. As tithe-holders they had a claim, in the divine name, upon the acknowledged inferiority of all their brethren; and were entitled to regard any neglect or invasion of their right as a display of irreligion and rebelliousness against God, Mal. iii. 8—10; Neh. xiii. 10—12. Their dignity, however, was subject to important limitations. Any one of their number held it only in common with all the individuals of a large body of fellow-officiates; he had no claim upon any of his sacerdotal brethren; he could not exact tithes except during the very brief period of his dispensation when he was in office; he had no superiority over any of the generations who preceded or followed him, or even over any of his contemporaries till he was of a mature and qualifying age. Melchizedek, on the other hand, had a claim of superiority over all Israel of every generation, over all the classes and generations of the Aaronic priests, and even over the patriarch Abraham, the father of many nations, in whom, through his seed, all the families of the earth should be blessed. 'How great, then, was this priest!' He who had the promises, whom Jews and believing Gentiles esteem the greatest of the redeemed, and along with him, all his natural and spiritual posterity, as well as a divinely commissioned race of priests, rendered him subjection, and rendered it while they viewed him solely in his official priestly capacity.

How expressive a type was Melchizedek's position of the supreme priesthood, the paramount priestly dignity and authority of our Lord! He receives from the whole body of the redeemed, from all the tribes and generations of the saved, from the genuine worshippers of God under every dispensation from the beginning till the end of time, that subjection in reality or in individual moral obedience which Melchizedek received only in type or in Abraham's payment of tithes. All the Aaronic and the patriarchal priests renounce their faded glories under the blaze of his priestly supremacy. 'The whole multitude of the saved in heaven and in earth give him tithes of all, the homage of every affection, and the obedience of every faculty as 'the apostle and high priest of their profession.' All have him as 'an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for them entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,' Heb. vi. 19, 20. 'To him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.' 'Thy people shall be a free-will offering in the day of thy power. Thy progeny, in the glorious sanctuary, shall be more than the dew in the womb of the morning. For Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever according to the order Melchizedek.'

3. A third peculiarity of Melchizedek's order of priesthood is intransferableness. Not only did the Levitical priests receive their office from predecessors, and transfer it to successors; but they shared it with a numerous company of fellow-officiates. Even the high priest could perform his functions only with the help of a large officiating body of inferior priests. The Aaronic priesthood, not only in itself, but in each of its ministrations, was completed in its design or made effective or significant in the attainment of its purposes, only by passing from hand to hand, and bringing into requisition 'many priests.' Melchizedek, on the contrary, had no predecessor, no successor, no fellow-officiate. He was the only priest of his dispensation, and performed all its work by his individual unaided ministrations.

Christ, in the same manner, 'because he continueth ever, hath an intransferable priesthood,' Heb. vii. 24, ἀπαράβατον ἱερωσύνην. 'Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory,' Zech. vi. 12, 13. He is the 'one Mediator between God and man.' His priestly dispensation rests exclusively in his hands, and can never communicate either its duties or its honours to another. He is the only officiate by whom men have access to God, the only offerer of a true atonement, the only possessor of the really priestly name, or the truly priestly glory. There remaineth no other sacrifice for sin than that which he offered once for all. 'Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,' Heb. x. 26; Acts iv. 12.

4. A fourth peculiarity of Melchizedek's order of priesthood is perpetuity. The Aaronic priests were 'not suffered to continue by reason of death,' Heb. vii. 23. Even during the brief period of their lifetime, they were not allowed to be priests except while in the vigour of their years. No Levite could be a priest till he was twenty-five years of age, or continue to hold the office after he was fifty, Numb. viii. 24, 25. Every Aaronic or patriarchal priest sustained his official character and exerted his official influence, during only a detached and unimportant section of the dispensation under which he ministered. Melchizedek, however, 'abode a priest continually.' 'He had neither beginning of days, nor end of life.' His priestly character was sustained during the whole of the dispensation to which he belonged, and his priestly influence was exerted on all its interests. When 'he who held the promises' required to have a priestly ministration on his behalf



as the typical representative of the faithful, he found Melchizedek abroad as 'the priest of the Most High God;' and when he had been so 'blessed' as not to need further benediction, he continued to see Melchizedek in the same character in which he originally met him.

Christ, in the same manner, is the high priest of his people, the true and only priest of the most high God, throughout the whole dispensation under which he ministers; and he makes his priestly influence to be felt on all its interests, and on all the persons who participate in its blessings. The whole multitude of the saved will eventually be found to have obtained 'redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' The results of his one offering for sin were virtually laid open to man in the first promise, and will continue to be exhibited for the acceptance of the guilty and helpless till the end of time. Having, as the great High Priest who entered once into the holiest of all, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he must needs reign in the influence of his priesthood till every believing sinner be pardoned and made a new creature, and all the designs of the dispensation of mercy to man be accomplished. 'Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,' Heb. vii. 25. 'Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle,'—arrayed in the robes of his priestly office, and displaying the insignia of his priestly power and glory,—he says, 'I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of the invisible world and of death,' Rev. i. 13, 18.

5. A fifth peculiarity of Melchizedek's order of priesthood is the mutual subserviency of priestly and kingly functions. The Levitical priests had neither interest nor influence additional to what was priestly in any of their ministrations. They acted, in all their official conduct, with simply the feelings and the views of priests. Melchizedek, on the contrary, was actuated by the strong and modifying motives, not only of a king, but of a king of righteousness and a king of peace. When, in discharge of his priestly functions, he said, 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth,' he added, from the promptings of his kingly character, 'And blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand,' Gen. xiv. 19, 20. As a king of righteousness, he was interested in the patriarch's triumph over heathen invaders and spoilers; as a king of peace, he was interested in the recovered and secured tranquillity of the patriarch's family and allies; and, both as a king of righteousness and a king of peace—concerned for the suppression of all wrong and turbulence, and careful for the administrative establishment of rectitude and happiness—he was interested in the patriarch's reception of all the well-being which could accrue from his own benediction and ministration as 'the priest of the most high God.' Though his priestly and his kingly offices were distinct, yet the functions of the former were strongly and benignly affected by the principles and predilections of the latter.

But how obscure, in this particular, is the type compared to the antitype! Christ wears 'the two crowns,' the silver mitre and the golden diadem; 'he sits and rules upon his throne;' 'he is a priest upon his throne;' and 'the counsel of peace is between them both,' Zech. vi. 11—13. While displayed to his people as a prosperous king who executes justice and judgment, he is, at the same time, exhibited to them as 'the Lord their righteousness,' for whose sake God acknowledges them for his own, and is just while he justifies them from their iniquity. They regard him, not only as swaying over them a sceptre of purity, but also as performing priestly ministrations by which they will be purified by the washing of water with the word, and eventually cleansed from spot and blemish and every such thing. The same persons who are reconciled by his priesthood, are governed by his kingship. They are simultaneously the subjects of his regal administration, and in the course of realizing the results of his intercession. While his kingly government is stamped with rectitude, and displays divine love of holiness and hatred of iniquity, he, at the same time, receives, as the High Priest of his people, that rich and odoriferous unction of the Spirit which is poured upon his head, and flows to the skirts of his garment, and imparts life and elasticity, strength and gladness, to all the members of his body. 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,' Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. 'Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.—Ed.]

[NOTE 3 P. *Satisfying Divine Justice*.—Dr. Ridgeley, in common with many theological writers, currently speaks of 'satisfaction to divine justice,' 'satisfying the justice of God.' We would here once for all submit a few remarks on these and kindred phrases.

The idea directly suggested by the words 'satisfying divine justice,' is far from what Dr. Ridgeley, or any other orthodox writer, intends them to convey. Satisfaction, literally understood, is just that notion of atonement which tends more than any other to produce wrong conceptions of the divine character, or to lead the mind into Socinianism. Vindication of the moral government of God, the magnifying of the divine law and the making of it honourable, the setting forth of Christ as a propitiatory to declare God's method of justification, that he is just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus, the exhibition of the entire moral glory of God in saving sinners, the glory alike of his equity, his mercy, his holiness, his love,—this, and not the offering of satisfaction to one perfection of Deity, is properly the grand result of the work of atonement. All God's attributes were concerned to bring man salvation. His equity as truly as his compassion,—his righteousness as truly as his mercy,—his justice as truly as his love, formed, revealed, and executed the plan of redemption. 'Mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other; truth sprang out of the earth, righteousness looked down from heaven, and justice went before God's face, to set us in the way of his steps.'

What we usually mean by 'the satisfying of divine justice,' is complying with the penal demands,

or vindicating the moral authority, of the divine law. Christ dealt directly with the law of God, and through this with his justice. He was 'made under the law,' he endured the 'curse of the law,' he 'became the end of the law,' he 'magnified the law, and made it honourable.' Whatever duties the law enjoined, he performed; whatever curses it denounced, he endured; and whatever claims it possessed on the people for whom he became surety, he discharged. He thus restored its insulted honour, and vindicated its divine authority, demonstrating all its enactments to be 'holy, just, and good.' But this 'magnifying of the law' had an influence no more on the divine justice than on the divine mercy. The design was as much to reconcile God's compassion as to reconcile his equity to the pardoning of sinners. Till our Lord's sacrifice was offered, the mercy of the Most High was as incompetent to give acceptance to the guilty, as his justice was incompetent to remit their condemnation; and now, when the sacrifice has been made, his justice as truly takes away penalty, as his mercy bestows all blessings. God thinks it unjust to exact twice the same punishment for the same offence; and having seen executed on his well-beloved Son all the punishment due to such of mankind as believe the gospel, he does not and cannot execute it on their own persons. His justice, therefore, goes before him to set us in the way of his steps, just at the same moment, and for the same reason, that his mercy and his truth meet together to bestow the blessings of his favour and fulfil the promises of his covenant. In approaching him through Christ, we confide in his entire character,—we see his whole nature to be love,—we rejoice equally in all his perfections.

Persons often talk of human sufferings as a satisfying of divine justice. So far as they think correctly, they ought rather to say that human sufferings all accord with divine equity. God has no enjoyment, and expresses no satisfaction, in the miseries even of the ungodly. 'He is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?' 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' The distresses of the ungodly are joint messengers of mercy with the appeals and invitations of the gospel, and are often blessed, in co-operation with the latter, for accomplishing the most beneficial designs of the divine love. Manasseh was 'taken among the thorns, and when he was in affliction, he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers; and he then knew that the Lord he was God.' Even the eternal sufferings of the finally condemned, while awarded in equity, and essential to the discountenancing of sin, are inflicted from benevolence to the subjects in general of God's moral government, and exert a benign influence on all God's moral creatures. Who will say that the very condemned themselves would not work out a greater and more terrible creation of torment if left to the free indulgence of their own depraved pleasure, than when permanently subjected to the restraints of the divine anger? So far from seeking satisfaction in punishing the wicked, the Most High directly indulges and promotes his benevolence. 'He cannot look on sin,' just because sin is the invariable and necessary cause of misery; and he maintains the dominion and enforces the practice of holiness, just because holiness is the essential and only source of real happiness. Now, every suffering which he inflicts in the present life is fitted to prevent the increase, to diminish the amount, or to destroy the influence of sin; and every punishment which he awards to the incorrigible is fitted to recommend holiness to the pure and the stable. Whatever he does to the wicked is, in this world, adapted to lead themselves to salvation; and, in the world hereafter, intended to prevent the creation of new causes of torment among the fallen, and to confirm the saved and the unfallen in the practice of all excellence, and the possession of all beatitude. In all his works, among all orders of his creatures, 'God is love.' 'He doth not afflict willingly'—or from his heart—'nor grieve the children of men.' He chastens his people, 'not for his own pleasure, but for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness.' Whether dealing with the righteous or with the wicked, he seeks at no time the satisfying of any severe principle in his own nature, but always indulges love, displays benevolence, and promotes the holy design of his government of blessedness toward his creatures.

God's justice is simply his equity. As a just judge, he has no austerity, but merely awards what is right; as a just lawgiver, he has no severity, but merely commands what is morally good; as a just king, he has no arbitrariness, but merely exacts what is due, and promotes what is benign. When he is just, he expects reverence; when he is merciful, he expects gratitude; and when either justice or mercy is displayed, he is glorified. But all his perfections have their glory or their satisfaction solely from himself. Nothing in man can either 'move his mercy' to bestow pardon, or dissuade his justice from doing what is equitable. He has accepted Christ as the Surety of believers; and simply because he is just, he absolves them from the penalties of his law. He, in the same way, can, in virtue of Christ's sacrifice, save the ungodly without making a compromise with sin; and simply because he is merciful, he is reconciled to his people, 'not imputing to them their trespasses.' But he was as truly infinite in both justice and mercy from eternity as at the present moment; he was neither 'moved to mercy,' nor induced to abate justice, by even the atoning sufferings of the Saviour; and greatly less is he incited either to cherish one perfection, or withhold the manifestation of another, by the deeds or distresses of his creatures. He is in his own nature, and ever was, and ever will be, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.'—Ed.]

[NOTE 3 Q. *The Altar on which Christ was offered.*—Various cogent arguments might be advanced against both the opinion which Dr. Ridgeley rejects, and the opinion which he espouses, respecting the altar on which Christ was offered. Instead of stating these, I shall offer a remark or two on Dr. Ridgeley's only argument in favour of his opinion, and assign some reasons—if the idea of an altar is at all to be entertained—for associating it with the entire scene of our Lord's expiatory sufferings, or simply with *the earth*.



The passage, 'Whether is greater the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift,' speaks, not of sacrifices, but of gifts,—things essentially different. Sacrifices were immolated animals; but gifts were offerings of oil and wine, flour and similar substances. The victims used in sacrifice were 'sanctified,' or set apart, when they were brought to the door of the tabernacle: but the vegetable materials employed in gifts were 'sanctified,' or set apart, only when laid upon the altar. Hence, the assertion, 'the altar sanctifieth,' devoteth or consecrateth 'the gift.' As regarded sacrifice, however, the altar did not sanctify it, but, on the contrary, it sanctified the altar. 'And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin-offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy,' Exod. xxix. 36, 37. Thus, in regard to sacrifices, the altar itself required to be sanctified,—sanctified seven days,—and sanctified with the blood of an expiatory victim.

The altar, then—if we are at all to conceive of one in reference to the offering of Christ—was such as required to be expiated. Now, the scene of our Lord's humiliation, or the earth, as such, on which he suffered, lay, in common with man, under the divine malediction. 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,' Gen. iii. 17, 18. Defiled by man's iniquity, and the scene of his rebellion, it bore marks of God's displeasure, or of the withdrawal of his complacency. It hence could be the scene from which 'truth should spring,' or a befitting altar for the offering of Christ and the invoking of the divine complacency, only by being specially consecrated or set apart. Now, an adequate cleansing of it was effected at the moment of our Lord's incarnation. It was sanctified by his mere presence, and became an appropriate altar simply by his making it the scene of his manifestation in the flesh.

Again, the altar was such as to be suited to the various nature and entire infliction of the expiatory sufferings which Christ endured. These sufferings, as Dr. Ridgeley has shown, were not only those of his death or final passion, but all which he experienced; and, identified with his entire humiliation, they extended from his assumption of our nature to his triumph over death and the grave. They included, not only the temporary desertion of the divine complacency, and the endurance of death, but previous protracted exposure to sorrow, privation and pain from men, from devils, and from the perturbed physical condition of the very world in which he tabernacled. What scene, then, was adapted to the endurance of them, or on what scene or altar were they actually undergone, except the surface, the bosom of the earth?

Further, the altar was such as, in its relative position to heaven, corresponded with the relative position of the Jewish altar to the sanctuary. The Holiest of all was the type of heaven, or of the place in which Christ intercedes; the Holy Place was the type of the church in the present state, or of believers as chosen out of the world and consecrated to God; and the court of the tabernacle was a type of the world as placed under a dispensation of respite and mercy, or of the condition in which men are previous to the expiatory remission of their sins. The high priest, on the great day of atonement, first slew the sacrificial victims in the court of the Tabernacle, and next went up, through the Holy Place, into the Holiest of all, there to appear before the Shechinah; and he thus represented God's spiritual Israel receiving the benefits of atonement under the dispensation of mercy, and then passing through the condition of fellowship with God on earth, to 'sit down together with Christ in the heavenly places.' There was hence an exact correspondence between the three apartments of the Temple on the one hand, and the native earth, the church in the world, and the heavenly sanctuary, on the other. Now, Christ, in connexion with his work of atonement, dealt with each of the three states. He first, as on an altar, sacrificed himself on earth; he next sojourned forty days exclusively with his disciples, and unsubjected to any penalties; and he finally entered the true heavenlies, there to perform whatever was prefigured by the Jewish high priest's appearance in the Holiest of all. From these considerations it seems evident that, if any thing whatever was designed to correspond in the way of antitype to the altar on which the Jewish sacrifices were offered, it was simply the earth as such, or the aggregate scene of our Lord's entire humiliation.—ED.]

[NOTE 3 R. *Christ's Purchase*.—In this place, Dr. Ridgeley, with probably one abatement, very justly and luminously defines Christ's act of purchase or redemption. Had he, instead of the phrase 'out of the hand of vindictive justice,' used the phrase 'from the curse of the law,' or from the legal dominion or condemning power of sin, his definition would have at once accorded exactly with the language of scripture, (See Gal. iii. 13; iv. 5; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18.) and expressed more clearly the idea which he intended to convey. But such as it is, I would take occasion from it to call attention to his current phraseology, in both the preceding and the subsequent part of his work, on the subject of Christ's purchase. Were we to frame, from what he has written, an answer to the question, 'What did Christ purchase?' we should be constrained to make it include almost, if not absolutely, everything connected with the dispensation of divine mercy. He currently talks of the purchase of salvation, the purchase of eternal life, the purchase of spiritual blessings, and even the purchase of redemption itself. He is countenanced, indeed, in such phraseology, not only by multitudes of theological writers, but also by the Westminster standards; but he is not, on that account, necessarily correct, and, if wrong, stands in just the more need of being subjected to scripture.

'The redemption purchased by Christ,' or the purchase of an act of purchase, is language, to say the least of it, so unmeaning, that one wonders at its having ever been used. This phrase, and 'the purchase of salvation,' 'the purchase of grace,' as well as all homologous phrases which Dr. Ridgeley currently employs, suggest ideas quite foreign to his definition of redemption. What Christ, according to that definition, redeemed or purchased was his people; and 'the way' in which he purchased them was 'judicial.' Now, how emphatically different, how almost antithetic, are the ideas

of purchasing salvation and of purchasing souls! To the phrase buying or ransoming souls, we can attach notions, not only luminous in themselves, but blended in their radiance with correct views of all the leading truths of revelation; but to the phrase buying or ransoming grace, blessings or salvation, we cannot, without first neutralizing the proper force of the words, attach any definite and just notions whatever. Not only so, but we are in danger,—inexperienced Christians at least are,—of attaching to the latter phrase, ideas utterly inconsistent with a view of the spontaneity of the divine love and mercy, and the true character of Christ's atonement as not offering an equivalent for blessings, but 'magnifying the divine law, and making it honourable,' bearing away the penalty of man's transgressions, and rendering it consistent with justice and holiness that believing sinners should be saved. Dr. Ridgeley, in a previous part of his work, (See Sect. 'The Reason of Salvation,' under Quest. xxx.) exhibits the spontaneity of the divine mercy, in terms which, if borne in mind, would have led him to qualify his current phraseology. He says, 'The only moving cause, or reason, why God bestows this great salvation, or why he has designed to bring any of the sons of men to it, is his mere love and mercy. Salvation, whether considered in its rise in God's eternal purpose, or in the execution of it in the work of conversion and sanctification, as well as in the completing of it in glorification, is ascribed to the sovereign grace and mercy of God.' This statement is made, indeed, with the design of showing that the divine mercy cannot be moved or merited by man; but it equally shows that the mercy is in its own nature spontaneous. The whole work of Christ, all his acts of mediation, even his coming to perform redemption or pay the price or ransom which he laid down, originated in mercy, and was a display of saving love. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,' 1 John iv. 10. Christ's work did not move the divine love; but the divine love moved the work of Christ. God's 'unspeakable gift,' his unutterable bountifulness, that active and all-pervading beneficence of his, whence proceed the blessings with which he enriches the world and blesses the redeemed, was displayed, not as the purchase of Christ's mediation, but as the motive of his advent and the reason of all his mediatorial work. What the Redeemer did, was not to pay an equivalent for blessings, but to 'commend God's love to the guilty,' to 'glorify' the divine 'name upon the earth,' to become 'the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' to redeem his people from the tyrant dominion of sin, to 'lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men.'

Of the very numerous texts which speak of God or of Christ purchasing, buying, ransoming or redeeming, all, with just one exception, appear to preserve perfect sameness or equivalency of language as to the objects of purchase. The solitary instance to which I refer, is not a real but only an apparent discrepancy, 'He brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased,' Psal. lxxviii. 54. Here purchasing, by a figure of speech not infrequent in scripture, is put for conquest or deliverance by power. What is spoken of is an act of 'the Lord's right hand,' and consequently an act altogether different in nature from those displays of his moral glory, or interpositions of his love and mercy, which, in other texts, are denominated his purchase. All the passages, then, which speak of the purchase of God or of Christ in the moral sense, all those in particular, which speak of the Mediator's purchase in executing the scheme of redemption, are of one scope and one phraseology as to the objects of purchase. In all of them, the Redeemer is represented as buying, purchasing, ransoming, redeeming souls, his people, his congregation, his church. 'Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased.' 'Ye are an holy nation, a purchased people.' 'Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.' 'The Holy Spirit of promise is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession,' Psal. lxxiv. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 9; Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 14. 'Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.' 'Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.' 'Even denying the Lord that bought them.' 'These were bought from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb,' 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; 1 Pet. ii. 1; Rev. xiv. 4. 'The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.' 'He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come.' 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave.' 'The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him,' Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Isa. xxxv. 10; Hos. xiii. 14; Jer. xxxi. 11. The examples of the sense of the word 'redeem,' are too numerous to be quoted; but they may be seen by turning to the following passages, Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 18; Rev. v. 9; Luke i. 68; Luke xxiv. 21; Psal. ciii. 4; xxxiv. 22; xlix. 8; xxxi. 5; lxxiv. 2; cvii. 2; cxxx. 8; Jer. xv. 21; Hos. xiii. 14; Gal. iv. 5; Tit. ii. 14; Isa. xlii. 1; xlv. 22, 23; lii. 3; lxiii. 9; Lam. iii. 58—and they will be found on examination to be quite as uniform as the examples of 'buying,' 'purchasing,' and 'ransoming,' and it possible, more stringent, and more exclusive of every signification, but the all-pervading one of purchasing, not blessings, not grace, not eternal life, not salvation, not any exercise or movement of God's love, but souls, the people of Christ, the church of the saved. Much will be gained, then, and nothing lost, to correct views of the divine character and the dispensation of mercy, by following this uniform usage of scripture language, and rejecting Dr. Ridgeley's current phraseology, as to the objects of Christ's purchase.



## CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

QUESTION XLV. *How doth Christ execute the office of a King?*

ANSWER. Christ executeth the office of a King, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them, in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their own good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

*The meaning of the word King.*

A KING is a person advanced to the highest dignity. In this sense the word is used in scripture, and in our common acceptance of it, as applied to men. More particularly, it denotes his having dominion over subjects. It is therefore a relative term; and the exercise of his dominion is confined within certain limits. But, as it is applied to God, it denotes universal dominion. The psalmist says, 'God is the King of all the earth.'<sup>m</sup> In this respect it properly denotes a divine perfection. That which we are led to consider, in this Answer, is, how Christ is more especially styled a King, as Mediator. Divines generally distinguish his kingdom into that which is natural, and that which is mediatorial. The former is founded in his deity, and not received by commission from the Father; in which respect he would have been the Governor of the world, as the Father is, though man had not fallen and there had been no need of a Mediator. The latter is what we are more especially to consider, namely, his mediatorial kingdom. This the psalmist intends when he represents the Father as saying, 'Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.'<sup>n</sup>

The method in which we shall speak concerning Christ's kingly office, shall be to show who are the subjects of it; the manner of his governing them; and the various ages in which his government is or shall be exercised, together with the different circumstances relating to its administration.

*The Subjects of Christ's Government.*

As to the subjects governed by Christ, they are either his people, or his enemies. The former are, indeed, by nature, enemies to his government, and unwilling to subject themselves to him; but they are made willing in the day of his power, are pleased with his government, and made partakers of its advantages. The latter, that is, his enemies, are forced to bow down before him, as subdued by him, though not to him. Hence, with respect to his people and his enemies, he exercises his government various ways. This leads us to consider the manner in which Christ exercises his kingly government.

*Christ's Government over his People.*

We shall first consider Christ's government with respect to his people. This government is either external and visible, or internal and spiritual. In the latter view of it, he exerts divine power, and brings men into a state of grace and salvation. The church is eminently the seat of this government. But as this will be farther noticed under a following Answer,<sup>o</sup> we shall, at present, only consider them as owning his government, by professing their subjection to him, and thereby separating themselves from the world. Christ governs them, as is observed in this Answer, by giving them officers, laws, and censures, and many other privileges, which the members of the visible church are made partakers of, and of which more shall be said in its proper place. What we shall principally consider, at present, is

<sup>m</sup> Psal. xlvii. 7.<sup>n</sup> Psal. ii. 6.<sup>o</sup> See Quest. lxii, lxiii.

Christ's exercising his spiritual and powerful government over his elect, in those things which more immediately concern their salvation.

1. Here we may observe their character and temper, before they are brought, in a saving way, into Christ's kingdom. There is no difference between them and the rest of the world, who are the subjects of Satan's kingdom. Their hearts are, by nature, full of enmity and rebellion against him; and they are suffered sometimes to run great lengths in opposing his government; and their lives discover a fixed resolution not to submit to him, whatever be the consequence. 'Other lords,' says the church, 'have dominion over them.'<sup>p</sup> 'They serve divers lusts and pleasures';<sup>q</sup> 'they walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience';<sup>r</sup> and some of them have reason to style themselves, as the apostle Paul says he was before his conversion, the chief of sinners.<sup>s</sup> Sometimes, indeed, they meet with some checks and rebukes of conscience, which, for a while, put them to a stand; and they seem inclinable to submit to Christ, being afraid of his vengeance, or their own consciences suggesting the reasonableness of submitting to him. This issues in some hasty resolutions, arising from the terror of their own thoughts, or the prospect of some advantage which will accrue to them, whereby their condition may be rendered better than what they, at present, apprehend it to be. This again extorts from them a degree of compliance with the gospel-overture; especially if Christ would stoop to those terms which corrupt nature is willing to conform itself to, or make those abatements which would be consistent with their serving God and Mammon. In this case, they are like the person whom our Saviour mentions, who being called, replies, 'I go, Sir, and went not.'<sup>t</sup> Sometimes they promise that they will submit hereafter, if they may but be indulged in their course of life for the present, and, like Felix, would attend to these matters at a more convenient season. Or they are like him who is represented as desiring our Saviour that he might 'first go and bury his father';<sup>u</sup> by which we are not to understand his performing that debt which the law of nature obliged him to perform to a deceased parent, which might have been soon discharged, and been no hinderance to his following Christ, but his being desirous to be excused from following him till his father was dead, and this with a design to gain time, or to ward off present convictions, his domestic affairs inclining him not immediately to subject himself to Christ, or to take up his lot with him, or to forsake all and follow him, though he was not insensible that this was his duty. This is the temper and character of persons before they are effectually persuaded to submit to Christ's government. The consequence often is their not only losing these convictions, but returning with stronger resolutions to their former course, and adding greater degrees of rebellion to their iniquity.

2. There are several methods used by Christ, to bring sinners into subjection to him; some of which are principally objective, and, though not in themselves sufficient, yet, necessary to answer this end. First, he gives them to understand that there is an inevitable necessity of perishing, if they persist in their rebellion against him. Our Saviour says, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'<sup>x</sup> Elsewhere, it is said, 'Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?'<sup>y</sup> It is said also that 'those his enemies that would not that he should reign over them, shall be brought forth, and slain before him.'<sup>z</sup> This is not only considered in a general way, as what other sinners are given to expect, but is impressed on the conscience, and particularly applied to the individual himself, whereby he is convinced that his present course is not only dangerous but destructive, and is filled with that distress and concern of soul which is the beginning of that work of grace which shall afterwards be brought to perfection.—Again, Christ holds forth his golden sceptre, and makes a proclamation to sinners to return and submit to him, and, at the same time, expresses his willingness to receive all who by faith close with the gospel-overture, and cast themselves at his foot with sincere repentance.

p Isa. xxvi. 13.

s 1 Tim. i. 15.

x Luke xiii. 3.

q Tit. iii. 3.

t Matt. xxi. 30.

y Job ix. 4.

r Eph. ii. 2.

u Matt. viii. 21.

z Luke xix. 27.



Thus he says, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'<sup>a</sup> How vile soever they have been, their unworthiness shall not be a bar to hinder his acceptance of them. He also shows them their obligations to obey and submit to him, as their rightful Lord and Sovereign, who claims divine worship from them,<sup>b</sup> and what unanswerable engagements they are laid under to render it, from all that he did and suffered in life and death, whereby he not only expressed the highest love, but purchased to himself a peculiar people, who must own him as their King, if they expect to reap the blessed fruits and effects of his purchase as a Priest.—Further, he represents to them the vast advantages which will attend their subjection to his government. Not only shall they obtain a full and free pardon of all their past crimes, and be taken into favour as much as though they had never forfeited it; but he will confer on them all those graces which accompany salvation, and advance them to the highest honour. On this account they are said to be made 'kings and priests unto God.'<sup>c</sup> Yea, he will grant them 'to sit with him in his throne.'<sup>d</sup> not as sharing any part of his mediatorial glory, but as being near to him that sits on the throne, and having all those tokens of his regard to them which are agreeable to their condition or to the relation they stand in to him as subjects. He presents to their view all the promises of the covenant of grace, which are in his hand to accomplish, and gives them ground to expect all the blessings he hath purchased, assures them that he will admit them to the most delightful and intimate communion with himself here, that he 'will keep them from falling,' and, in the end, 'present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.'<sup>e</sup> As for their past follies, ingratitude, and rebellion against him, he tells them, that these shall be passed over, and not laid to their charge;<sup>f</sup> and that how expedient soever it may be for him to bring them to their remembrance, to humble them, and enhance their love and gratitude to him, he will, notwithstanding, forgive them.—Again, he gives them to understand what duties he expects from them, and what are the laws which all his subjects are obliged to obey. Accordingly, he will not give forth any dispensation or allowance to sin, which is a returning again to folly; nor will he suffer them to make their own will the rule of their actions, or to live as they list, or to give way to carnal security, negligence, or indifference, in his service. But they must be always pressing forwards, running the race he has set before them with diligence and industry, that they 'be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises,'<sup>g</sup> and not only so, but 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'<sup>h</sup> They must also have a zeal for his honour, as those who appear to be in good earnest, and prefer his interest to their own; and this must be tempered with meekness, lest, while they seem to be espousing his cause, they give ground to conclude that the indulging of their irregular passions is what they principally design. As for the obedience he demands of them, it must be universal, with their whole heart, and to the utmost of their power. Hence, if the duty enjoined be difficult, they must not say, as some of his followers did, 'This is an hard saying, who can hear it?'<sup>i</sup> but rather, in this case, depend on his grace for strength to enable them to perform it. And, as they are to obey his commanding will, so he tells them they must submit to his providential will, and therein glorify his sovereignty, and reckon every thing good which he does, inasmuch as it proceeds from a wise and gracious hand, and is rendered subservient to answer the best ends, for his glory and their advantage. Moreover, he tells them, that whatever obedience they may be enabled to perform, they must ascribe the glory of it, not to themselves, but to him, as he is the Author and Finisher of faith, and works in them all those graces which he requires of them. When they have thus engaged in his service, and their faces are turned heavenward, he obliges them never to think of returning to their former state and company, or subject themselves to the tyranny they are delivered from. As the angel ordered Lot, when he had escaped out of Sodom, not so much as to look back, as one that had a hankering mind to what he had left behind him; or as the Israelites sinned who longed for the onions and garlick and flesh-pots of Egypt,

<sup>a</sup> John vi. 37.  
<sup>f</sup> Rom. viii. 33.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. xlv. 11.  
<sup>g</sup> Heb. vi. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Rev. i. 6.  
<sup>h</sup> Rom. xii. 11.

<sup>d</sup> Rev. iii. 21.  
<sup>i</sup> John vi. 60.

<sup>e</sup> Jude, ver. 24.

when they were on their journey towards the good land which God had promised them; so Christ expects that all his subjects should not only obey him, but that they should do so with unflinching perseverance, as 'not being of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'<sup>k</sup>

We have thus sketched the present obligations and future advantages, together with the duties which Christ's subjects are engaged to perform; or the laws of his kingdom, which he makes known to them, before they are brought into subjection to him. We may now add, that he presents to them not only the bright, but the dark side of the cloud, and sets before them the many difficulties and troubles they are likely to meet with in this world, in common with the rest of his subjects, that they may not hereafter be under any temptation to complain as if they were disappointed, when things go otherwise than they were given to expect. As, with one hand, he represents to their view the crown of life; so, with the other, he holds forth the cross, which they must take up, and follow him,<sup>l</sup> if they would be his disciples. He does not conceal from them the evils they are likely to meet with from the world; but tells them plainly, that they must expect to be 'hated of all men for his name's sake,'<sup>m</sup> and be willing to part with all things for him, especially if standing in competition with him; so that he who loveth father or mother, son, or daughter, yea, his own life, more than him, is not worthy of him.<sup>n</sup> He tells them that self-denial must be their daily exercise, that no idol of jealousy must be set up in their hearts, no secret or darling lust indulged, as being not only contrary to the temper and disposition of his subjects, and a dishonour to their character, but inconsistent with that supreme love which is due to him alone. He also warns them not to hold any confederacy with his enemies, strictly forbids them to make any covenant with death and hell, and requires that all former covenants therewith should be disannulled and broken, as containing a tacit denial of their allegiance to him.

These are the methods which Christ uses, in an objective way, to bring his people into his kingdom. But they are not regarded by the greater part of those who sit under the sound of the gospel; nor, indeed, are they effectual to answer this end in any, till he is pleased to incline and enable them, by his power, to submit to him. He must first conquer them, before they will obey. Before this, they had no more than an external overture, or representation of things, in which he dealt with them as intelligent creatures, in order to their becoming his subjects out of choice, as having the strongest motives and inducements to become such. But his conquering them is an internal work upon the heart, whereby every thing which hindered their compliance is removed, and they are drawn by that power without which 'no man can come unto him.'<sup>o</sup> Their hearts are broken, their wills renewed, and all the powers and faculties of their souls inclined to subscribe to his government, as King of saints.

3. This leads us to consider how persons first express their willingness to be Christ's subjects, what engagements they lay themselves under, and what consequent course they pursue. They cast themselves at his feet with the greatest humility and reverence, being sensible of their own vileness and ingratitude, and, at the same time, are greatly affected with his clemency and grace who, notwithstanding their unworthiness, invites them to come to him. This they do, not as desiring to capitulate or stand upon terms with him; but they are willing that he should make his own terms, like one who sends a blank paper to his victorious prince, that he may write upon it what he pleases, and expresses his willingness to subscribe it. This may be illustrated by the incident of Benhadad's servants. When his army was entirely ruined, and he no longer able to make resistance against Ahab, they presented themselves before him 'with sackcloth on their loins, and ropes on their head,' in token of the greatest humility, together with an implicit acknowledgment of what they had deserved; and without the usual method of entering into treaties of peace, the only message they delivered was, 'Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live.'<sup>p</sup> Thus the humble returning sinner implores

<sup>k</sup> Heb. x. 39.<sup>l</sup> Matt. xvi. 24.<sup>m</sup> Matt. x. 22.<sup>n</sup> Matt. x. 37. compared with Luke xiv. 26.<sup>o</sup> John vi. 44.<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings xx. 32.



forgiveness, and a right to his life, as an act of grace, at the hand of Christ, who has been represented to him, in the gospel, as a merciful King, and ready to receive returning sinners. This subjection to Christ is attended with the greatest love to and desire after him. These they express to his person and his service, being constrained by that love and compassion which he hath showed to them, and by those just ideas which they are now brought to entertain concerning every thing which belongs to his kingdom and interest.—Again, they consent to be the Lord's by a solemn act of self-dedication or surrender of themselves and all they have to him, as seeing themselves obliged so to do; and they desire to be his, to all intents and purposes, his entirely and for ever.—Further, as there are many difficult duties incumbent on Christ's subjects, and many blessings which they hope to receive, they express their entire dependence on him for grace, to enable them to behave themselves agreeably to the obligations they are under, that they may not turn aside from him, or deal treacherously with him, as being unsteadfast in his covenant. They also rely on his faithfulness for the accomplishment of all the promises which afford matter of relief and encouragement to them; and their doing so is accompanied with a fixed purpose or resolution to wait on him, in all his ordinances, as means appointed by him, in which they hope to obtain those blessings they stand in need of. Moreover, this is done with a solemn withdrawing themselves from, and renouncing and testifying their abhorrence of, those to whom they were formerly in subjection, whose interest is contrary to and subversive of Christ's government. These they count to be their greatest, yea, their only enemies: and they proclaim open war against them, and that with a fixed resolution, by the grace of God, to pursue it to the utmost,—like the courageous soldier, who, having drawn his sword, throws away the scabbard, as one who will not leave off fighting till he has gained a complete victory. Their resolution, too, is increased by that hatred which they entertain against sin, and is exercised in proportion to it. The enemies against whom they engage are the world, the flesh, and the devil; and the motives which induce them are, that these are enemies to Christ, and stand in the way of his salvation. Now, that they may manage this warfare with success, they take to themselves 'the whole armour of God,' described by the apostle,<sup>a</sup> which is both offensive and defensive. They also consider themselves obliged to shun all treaties or proposals made to them to turn them aside from Christ, and to avoid every thing which may prove a snare or temptation to them, or tend to Christ's dishonour.

We may add, that the subject of Christ's government has a due sense of his obligation to endeavour to deliver others from their servitude to sin and Satan, to encourage those who are almost persuaded to submit to Christ, and to strengthen the hands of those who have already entered into his service, and who are engaged with him in the same warfare against his enemies, and pursuing the same design conducive to his glory. The methods he takes, in order to this end, are truly warrantable, and becoming the servants of Christ. He is not like the Scribes and Pharisees, who were very zealous to gain proselytes to their interest, when they had done which, 'they made them twofold more the children of hell than themselves.'<sup>r</sup> But he makes it his business to convince those with whom he converses, that they are subject to the greatest tyranny of those who intend nothing but their ruin, that they serve those who have no right to their service, and, that the only way to obtain liberty is to enter into Christ's service, and then they will be 'free indeed.'<sup>s</sup> Moreover, he endeavours to remove the prejudices, and answer all objections which Satan usually brings, or furnishes his subjects with, against Christ and his government. If they say, with the daughters of Jerusalem, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved?' he has many things to say in his commendation. As the church is brought in using various metaphorical expressions to set forth his glory, so he joins with her in ascribing that comprehensive character to him which contains the sum of all that words can express: 'He is altogether lovely; this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.'<sup>t</sup> This is the way in which Christ's subjects engage against and oppose Satan's kingdom.

But let it be observed, that the opposition is mutual. When persons are delivered

q Eph. vi. 11—17.

r att. xxiii. 15.

s John viii. 36.

t Cant. v. 9, 16.

out of the power of darkness, and translated into Christ's kingdom, they are not to expect to be wholly free from the assaults of their spiritual enemies. These often gain great advantages against them, from the remains of corrupt nature in the best of men. The devil is represented, by the apostle, as 'a roaring lion who walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'<sup>u</sup> Sometimes he gives disturbance to Christ's subjects, by inclining men to exercise their persecuting rage and fury against the church, designing hereby to work upon their fear. At other times, he endeavours, as it were, by methods of bribery, to engage unstable persons in his interest, by the overture of secular advantage; or else, to discourage some, by pretending that religion is a melancholy thing, and that they who embrace it are likely to strive against the stream, and meet with nothing but what will make them uneasy in the world. The opposition thus directed against Christ's kingdom, often proves very discouraging to his subjects — But there are attempts of another nature often used to amuse, discourage, and destroy their peace, by taxing them with hypocrisy, and pretending that all their hope of an interest in Christ's favour and protection is but a delusion, and that it had been better for them not to have given in their names to him, as the only consequence will be the enhancing of their condemnation. If the providences of God be dark and afflictive, Satan endeavours to suggest to them hard thoughts of Christ, and to make them question his goodness and faithfulness, and to say, with the psalmist, 'Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.'<sup>x</sup> And, when God is pleased, at any time, for wise ends, to deny them his comforting presence, the enemy is ready to persuade them, as the psalmist represents some as saying, that 'there is no help for them in God.'<sup>y</sup> These methods are often used by the enemies of Christ's kingdom, to weaken the hands of his subjects; whereby the exercise of their graces is often interrupted, and they are hurried into many sins, through the violence of temptation. They shall not, however, wholly revolt. Grace may be foiled, and weakened; but it shall not be utterly extinguished. Though they be guilty of many failures and miscarriages, which discover them to be in an imperfect state; yet they are preserved from relapsing into their former state. Not only so, but they are often enabled to prevail against their spiritual enemies. In this the concern of Christ for their good eminently discovers itself. And, if the advantage gained against them be occasioned by their going in the way of temptation, or not being on their guard, or not using those means which might prevent their being overcome, it is overruled by Christ to humble them and make them more watchful for the future. Or if God has left them to themselves, that he may show them the sin and folly of their self-confidence, or reliance on their own strength, their fall will be a means to induce them to be more dependent on him for the future, as well as importunate with him, by faith and prayer, for that grace which is sufficient to prevent their total and final apostacy, as well as to recover them from their present backslidings. These many weaknesses and defects which give them so much uneasiness, will also induce them to sympathize with others in a similar condition; and the various methods which Christ takes for their recovery, will render them skilful in directing others how to escape or disentangle themselves from the snare in which they have been taken, and which has given them so much uneasiness.

We might here have enlarged on that particular branch of the subject which respects the warfare that is to be carried on by every one who enlists himself under Christ's banner, and owns him to be his rightful Lord and sovereign. This occupies a very considerable part of the Christian life. He is said 'to wrestle not' only 'against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,' and 'against spiritual wickedness in high places.'<sup>z</sup> Elsewhere, too, we read of 'the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.'<sup>a</sup> But as this will be considered under a following Answer, in which we shall be led to speak of the imperfection of sanctification in believers, together with the reasons of it,<sup>b</sup> we pass it over at present.

4. Let us now consider how Christ deals with his subjects after he has brought them

u 1 P. t. v. 8.  
z Eph. vi. 12.

x Psal. lxxiii. 13.  
a Gal. v. 17.

y Psal. iii. 2.  
b See Quest. lxxviii.



into his kingdom, and inclined and enabled them to submit to his government. This is expressed in the Answer we are explaining, in several particulars.—First, he rewards their obedience. This supposes that he requires that they should obey him, and that their obedience should be constant and universal, otherwise they deserve not the character of subjects. As to Christ's regard to this obedience, though men in rendering it are not profitable to God, as they are to themselves or to one another, yet it shall not go unrewarded. The blessings which Christ confers on them are sometimes styled a reward; inasmuch as there is a certain connection between their duty and interest, or their obeying and being made blessed. This blessedness is properly the reward of what Christ has done; though his people esteem it as an act of the highest favour. In this sense he rewards their obedience; and that either by increasing their graces, and establishing their comforts here, or by bringing them to perfection hereafter.—But as their obedience is, at present, very imperfect, which tends very much to their reproach, and affords matter of daily humiliation before God, it is added, in the Answer we are considering, that Christ corrects them for their sins. This is truly one of the advantages of his government. Though it is certain that afflictions, absolutely considered, are not to be desired; yet as they are sometimes needful,<sup>b</sup> and conducive to our spiritual advantage, they are included in the gracious dispensation of Christ's government, as 'by these things men live.'<sup>c</sup> How much soever nature dreads them, yet Christ's people consider them as designed for their good; and they, therefore, not only submit to them, but conclude that in afflicting them, he deals well with them. As we are far from blaming the skilful surgeon, who sets a bone that is out of joint, or cuts off a limb when the amputation of it is necessary to save our lives, though neither of these can be done without great pain; so, when God visits our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes, we reckon that he deals with us as a merciful and gracious Sovereign, and not as an enemy, his design being to heal our backslidings, and prevent a worse evil from ensuing.—Further, Christ preserves and supports his subjects under all their temptations and sufferings. There are two sorts of temptations mentioned in scripture. One sort are those which are merely providential, and which are designed as trials of faith and patience. 'My brethren, count it all joy,' says the apostle James, 'when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.'<sup>d</sup> The apostle Paul also, speaking of the persecutions which he met with from the Jews, calls them 'temptations.'<sup>e</sup> But, besides these, there are other temptations which arise from sin, Satan, and the world, whereby endeavours are used more directly to draw Christ's subjects from their allegiance to him. Thus it is said, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed';<sup>f</sup> and elsewhere, 'They that will be rich,' that is, who take indirect means to attain that end, or who make it the grand design of life, 'fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.'<sup>g</sup> The devil, also, who has a great hand in managing these temptations, and solicits us to comply with them, is, for that reason, called, by way of eminence, 'the tempter.'<sup>h</sup> In both these respects, believers are exposed to great danger, by reason of temptations, and need either to be preserved from, or supported under them, that they may not prove their ruin. Now, Christ thus preserves and supports them, in managing the affairs of his kingdom of grace for their advantage; and herein that promise is fulfilled to them, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'<sup>i</sup>—Again, Christ powerfully orders all things for his own glory, and his people's good. All things are said to 'work together for good';<sup>k</sup> and in their doing so, his wisdom, as well as his goodness, is illustrated. Sometimes, indeed, his people cannot see from the beginning of an afflictive providence to the end of it, or what advantage God designs by it; and in such a case we may apply to them those words of our Saviour to Peter, though spoken with another view, 'What I do thou know-

b 1 Pet. i. 6.      c Isa. xxxviii. 16.      d James i. 2, 3.      e Acts xx. 19.      f James i. 14.  
g 1 Tim. vi. 9.      h 1 Thess. iii. 5. and Matt. iv. 3.      i 1 Cor. x. 13.      k Rom. viii. 28.

est not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.<sup>1</sup> This will eminently appear, when they shall see how every step which Christ has taken in the management of his government, has had a subserviency to promote their spiritual advantage here, and their everlasting salvation hereafter.

*Christ's Government toward his Enemies.*

Having considered how Christ executes his kingly office, more especially towards his people, who are his faithful subjects, we are now to speak concerning the exercise of his kingly government towards his enemies. He is not their King, as was formerly observed, by consent, or voluntary subjection to him; nor do they desire to own his authority, or yield obedience to his laws. Yet they are, notwithstanding, to be reckoned the subjects of his government.

1. This government is exercised in setting bounds to their power and malice, so that they cannot do what they would against his cause and interest in the world. How far soever he may suffer them to proceed to the disadvantage of his people; yet he is able to crush them in a moment. And when he sees their rage, and how they set themselves against him with their combined force and insult, as if they had brought their designs to bear, and could not doubt the success of them, he tells them plainly, that 'they imagine a vain thing,' and that 'he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.'<sup>m</sup> The reason is very obvious; it is, that God is greater than man. Though it would be a dishonour to him to say, that he is the author of sin, yet it redounds to his glory that he sets bounds and limits to it, and overrules it by his wisdom to his own glory. Accordingly, it is said, 'Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.'<sup>n</sup>

2. Christ has exercised his kingly government in gaining a victory over his enemies. This he did, when 'he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.' It was done by him, indeed, when he was in the lowest depths of his sufferings, and in a more eminent degree exercised his priestly office; yet, in some respects, he is said, at that time, to have exercised his kingly power, and that in a very triumphant manner, as is here expressed. Elsewhere also he is said, 'through death, to have destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.'<sup>o</sup> Hereby he purchased those restraints which the powers of darkness were brought under more than they were before. Satan's chain was hereby shortened, and his subjects delivered out of his hand, being ransomed by the blood of Christ. As the consequence, they were afterwards persuaded to withdraw their necks from that yoke which they were formerly under, by the power of that grace which attended the preaching of the gospel, whereby they were subjected to Christ's government. Moreover, our Saviour tells his people, that he had 'overcome the world;'<sup>p</sup> not only because he had, in his own Person, escaped its pollution, and not been entangled in its snares, nor hindered in the work he was engaged in, by the afflictions and injurious treatment which he met with from it; but because he had procured for them those victories over it whereby they shall be made 'more than conquerors through him that loved them.'

3. Christ's kingly government is, and shall hereafter more eminently be, exercised towards his enemies, in punishing them for all their rebellions against him. There are reserves of vengeance laid up in store, and more vials of wrath, which shall be poured forth on Satan, and all the powers of darkness. This they are not without some terrible apprehensions of, from the knowledge they have of God, as a just judge. Hence, they are said to 'believe and tremble.'<sup>q</sup> As to all his other enemies, he will 'break them with a rod of iron; he will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel,'<sup>r</sup> or bring them forth, and slay them before him.<sup>s</sup>

1 John xiii. 7.  
p John xvi. 33.

m Psal. ii. 1, 4.  
q James ii. 19.

n Psal. lxxvi. 10.  
r Psal. ii. 9.

o Heb. ii. 14.  
s Luke xix. 27.



*The Periods of Christ's Government.*

Having shown how Christ's kingly government is exercised toward his people and his enemies, we are led to consider the various seasons, or ages, in which it has been, or shall be exercised, together with the different circumstances relating to its administration in these ages. As soon as man fell, and thereby stood in need of a mediator to recover him, Christ was revealed as one who had undertaken his recovery, and as a victorious King, who should break and destroy that power which had brought him into subjection. Now, there are various periods, or seasons, in which he has executed his kingly office, or shall continue so to do.

1. He did this before his incarnation, during which time his government, as to its effects, was visible, as extended to all those who were saved under the Old Testament dispensation. They were subdued and defended by his divine power then exerted on their behalf, as well as discharged from condemnation, by virtue of the sacrifice which, in the fulness of time, he was to offer for them. We have already shown how he executed his prophetic office during this interval.<sup>t</sup> Now we must consider him as exercising his kingly office. The majestic way in which he delivered the law from mount Sinai, was a glorious display of it; and the theocracy which the Israelites were under, which is described in scripture as a government distinct from all others, and excelling them in glory, and the suberviency of it to their salvation, was a farther evidence that he was their King. This he evinced, at one time, by his appearing to Joshua, as 'the Captain of the Lord's hosts.' At another time it was represented in an emblematic way, when he was seen by the prophet Isaiah, as 'sitting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple.' In the book of Psalms, he is frequently acknowledged by the church as their 'King.' There it is said concerning him, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.'<sup>u</sup> In many other places, he is described as 'the King, the Lord of hosts,' not only as predicting the future exercise of his government, but as denoting what he was at that time. It was also said concerning him, 'Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?'<sup>x</sup> And when God declares that he had advanced him to his mediatorial dignity, and 'set him on his holy hill of Zion,' 'the kings and judges of the earth' are exhorted to 'serve him with fear,' and, in token of their willingness to be his subjects, 'to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.'<sup>y</sup>

2. After his incarnation, when he first came into the world, he was publicly owned, by the wise men who came from the east, as one who 'was born King of the Jews;' and the gifts which they presented to him of gold, frankincense, and myrrh,<sup>z</sup> the best presents which their country afforded, were designed to signify that homage which was due to him, as one whom God had appointed to be the King of his church, though his external mien and the circumstances of his birth contained no visible marks of regal dignity. While he conversed with his people, in the exercise of his public ministry, he gave them frequent intimations of his kingly character. He described the nature of his kingdom as spiritual, and not of this world; and, when one of his followers addressed him as 'the Son of God, and the King of Israel,' so far from reproving him, as ascribing to him a glory which did not belong to him, he not only commends his faith as expressed in the confession, but gives him to understand that he should have a greater evidence of the truth of his kingly dignity, when 'he should see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon him.'<sup>a</sup> In the close of his life, also, when he entered into Jerusalem, with a design to give himself up to the rage and fury of his enemies, providence, as it were, extorted a confession of his regal dignity, from the unstable multitude, and, at the same time, designed to fulfil what was foretold by the prophet Zechariah, when he says, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just,

<sup>t</sup> See Sect. 'The Periods of Christ's ministering as a Prophet,' under Quest. xliii.

<sup>u</sup> Psal. xlv. 6.  
pared with verse 11.

<sup>x</sup> Jer. viii. 19.

<sup>a</sup> John i. 49—51.

<sup>y</sup> Ps. ii. 6, 10, 12.

<sup>z</sup> Matt. ii. 2, com-

and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.<sup>b</sup> Their saying, 'Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord,'<sup>c</sup> was the result of a present conviction of this matter, though it did not long abide, and, by their uttering it, they were, as it were, condemned out of their own mouths. Again, when Pilate asked him, in plain terms, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' he publicly professed himself to be so. He gave him to understand, however, that 'his kingdom was not of this world;' and on this account, the apostle says, that 'before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession,' and he styles him, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.'<sup>d</sup>

3. Christ still executes his kingly office in that glorified state in which he now is. This the apostle intimates, in an allusion to the custom of kings in their solemn triumphs over their enemies. As these threw medals amongst the people to perpetuate the remembrance of their victories, and bestowed donatives, or peculiar marks of favour, on occasion of their triumphs; so, says the apostle, 'Christ ascended up on high,' having 'led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'<sup>e</sup> There are undeniable proofs of his regal dignity in this exalted state, in the blessings which his church, in this world, receives as the result of it, as well as in the honours which are paid him by the inhabitants of heaven. The Socinians, indeed, will not allow that he executed his kingly office on earth. But their opinion is contrary to the account we have of his executing it in his humble state, as above-mentioned. We must suppose, therefore, that, when Christ entered into his glory, he did not begin to reign; though, from that time, he has exercised his government in a different manner. On this account, the gospel-dispensation which ensued, is called, by way of eminence, 'his kingdom;' and, because this dispensation began upon his ascension into heaven, it is sometimes called, in the New Testament, 'the kingdom of heaven.' I need not add much concerning the present exercise of his kingly government, as the greater part of what has been said under this Answer has a particular reference to it. It was after his ascension into heaven that the gospel church was established, which is sometimes called his visible kingdom. Then it was that the laws and ordinances by which it was to be governed were made known to it; together with the peculiar privileges which were then bestowed upon it, as the effects of Christ's royal bounty. Then the Spirit was sent, and, by his assistance, the gospel was preached to all nations, saving grace plentifully bestowed on multitudes, who were enabled to subject themselves to Christ, as King of saints. In this manner, the Saviour has hitherto exercised his kingly government, and will do until his second coming.

### *The Millennial Reign of Christ.*

Here we shall take occasion to consider what is advanced by several concerning Christ's reigning a thousand years on earth, which, they suppose, will intervene between the present administration of the affairs of his kingdom, and the saints reigning with him in heaven for ever. This opinion has not only the countenance of many ancient writers, who have defended it; but it seems to be founded on several scriptures. Hence, we shall be led, in considering this subject, rather to inquire into the true sense of those scriptures which speak of Christ's reigning on earth, than to deny that he will, in any sense, reign therein in a way circumstantially different from that in which he now administers the affairs of his kingdom. Here we shall consider what is advanced concerning this matter, by some who assert many things relating to it, which stand in need of stronger arguments to defend them than have hitherto been brought; and then we shall consider how far we have ground from scripture to say, that Christ shall reign on earth, and all his saints who shall live in it with him, and what we may conclude to be the true sense of those scriptures which are brought in defence of Christ's personal reign.

The opinions of those who treat on this subject are so different, that to treat distinctly of them all, would be too great a diversion from my general design. The diversity of these opinions also renders it more difficult to lay down the state of the

b Zech. ix. 9.

c John xii. 13.

d 1 Tim. vi. 13, 15.

Eph. iv. 8.



question in a few words. However, I shall briefly attempt this. And, that we may proceed with greater clearness, I shall consider what is asserted by several writers, concerning Christ's personal reign on earth, which shall be in the latter end of the world, and is to continue, from the time that it commences, a thousand years.

Some have supposed that this reign of a thousand years includes the whole compass of time in which Christ shall judge the world. This is called, indeed, in scripture, 'a day;' but it cannot reasonably be supposed that it shall extend to no more than the space of twenty-four hours. They suppose, therefore, that it shall extend to the space of a thousand years. This opinion they found partly on that scripture, 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past;'<sup>f</sup> and more especially on the apostle's words, 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'<sup>g</sup> This passage they apply, in particular, to the day of judgment, which is spoken of in the verse immediately preceding. As we have ground to believe, too, that the judgment shall take place on earth, and that, when Christ judges the world, it may be truly said he exercises his kingly office in a most glorious manner, they conclude that this reign of a thousand years includes all the time which he will occupy in judging the world. But, even in this matter, all do not agree in their sentiments. Some think that, in this judicial process, none are to be judged but the saints, who, being acquitted by him, are said to reign with him; that, in order to this, they shall be raised from the dead, which they suppose to be meant by 'the first resurrection;' and that the rest of mankind shall not be raised till the thousand years are finished.<sup>h</sup> But this opinion seems not agreeable to the account we have elsewhere in scripture of Christ's raising the dead, coming to judgment, and determining the state, both of the righteous and the wicked, as what is to be done in or near the same time, each of these being distinct branches of the same solemnity. What makes the opinion still more probable is, that, in the same scripture in which we have an account of the reign of a thousand years, it immediately follows that, when these years shall be expired, Satan will be loosed out of his prison, and suffered 'to deceive the nations;' and then we read of other enemies which the church shall have, concerning whom it is said, that 'they shall be gathered together to battle,' and that they went 'up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.' Now all this is said to be done between the end of the reign of a thousand years, and the general judgment, when 'the dead, small and great, shall be raised, the books opened, and all judged out of those things that are written therein, according to their works.' Hence, this opinion, as to the reign of a thousand years, including the time in which Christ shall appear in this world to judge his saints, does not seem to be the sense of that scripture on which the opinion is supposed to be founded.<sup>i</sup>

The more common opinion, which is defended by several ancient and modern Chiliasts, or Millenarians, as they are generally called, is that our Lord Jesus Christ shall, some time in the last days, before he comes to the final judgment, appear in this world, in his human nature, and dwell and reign among its inhabitants, in such a way, as may render it a kind of middle state between that which the church is now in, and heaven,—more glorious than the former, and yet very much inferior to the latter. They suppose that there are several things which shall go immediately before it, as tending to usher in the glory of that kingdom. One of these things is the conversion of the Jews, which is to be effected at once. In order to this, some conclude that the dispensation of miracles shall be revived; which they argue from the fact, that all the remarkable changes which have been made in the affairs of the church, have been introduced by miracles. The Jews, also, more than any other nation in the world, have been desirous of a conviction by such a method as this. Moreover, it is supposed, that, at the same time, those scriptures which foretell a greater fulness of the Gentiles, or the conversion of many who still remain in the darkness of heathenism, shall have their accomplishment in an eminent degree; that this shall also proceed from, and be attended

with, a greater degree of the effusion of the Spirit; that the consequence will be a more glorious light shining throughout the world, than has ever been; and that these two, the Jews and the Gentiles, shall be joined together in one body, under Christ, their visible and glorious Head. Moreover, some suppose that Jerusalem, and the countries round about it, shall be the principal seat of this kingdom, to which these new converts shall repair; so that, as there the glorious scene of the gospel was first opened, there also the glory of Christ's personal reign shall begin. Others add, that, at this time, the temple at Jerusalem shall be built, which shall far exceed in glory that which was built by Solomon, and that the New Jerusalem shall be also built and adorned in a magnificent way, agreeable to what is said of it in scripture,<sup>k</sup> which they understand in a literal sense. In this I must take leave to differ from them; though not in what was just now hinted, concerning the conversion of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles, going before it.

Though some suppose that the general conflagration, spoken of by the apostle Peter,<sup>l</sup> shall be after this reign of a thousand years, which is certainly the more probable opinion; yet others have concluded that it shall be before it, and that 'the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' which believers, 'according to God's promise, look for,' shall arise out of the ruins of the old. This is the opinion of a late writer,<sup>m</sup> who advances many things concerning the antediluvian world, as well as concerning this new one, with an elegance of style which is very entertaining, and who, in many instances, runs counter to the sentiments of all that went before him, and produces a work than which a more ingenious romance is hardly extant. But as, for the most part, he brings in scripture to give countenance to what he advances, and lays down a peculiar scheme concerning the millennium, I cannot wholly pass it over. He supposes, that the reign of Christ on earth shall be ushered in by a general conflagration, in which all the inhabitants must necessarily be consumed, and the world reduced into a second chaos by fire. And, as his master Des Cartes describes the form of the world when first created, and how the various particles of matter were disposed, in order to its being brought to that perfection to which it afterwards arrived; so he describes the form to which the world shall be reduced by this conflagration, out of which the new world shall be framed. Having done this, and being at a loss to find out inhabitants for it, he supposes that the dead shall be raised. To this part of his theory, he applies what is said in scripture concerning 'the first resurrection;' and then, he says, the reign of a thousand years begins. But he is much more at a loss, as might easily be supposed, to account for Gog and Magog, the enemies of the church, which shall give it great disturbance at the close of this period. As he cannot easily suppose them to be raised from the dead for this end, he fancies that they shall spring out of the earth; and this supposition so much embarrasses his scheme, that, whatsoever scriptures he brings in its defence, it must be esteemed, by impartial judges, to be attended with the greatest absurdities.

There are others who suppose, that the general conflagration shall not be till the end of the thousand years' reign; and who, nevertheless, conclude that the dead shall be raised, more particularly those who are designed to reign with Christ. With respect to this, the sentiments of persons are somewhat different. Some suppose that none shall be raised, at this time, but those who have suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake; and that this is the meaning of that expression, 'I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and they lived and reigned a thousand years.'<sup>n</sup> Others suppose, that because many who have not suffered death for Christ's sake have, in other respects, passed through an equal number of persecutions and reproaches in life, and were ready to suffer martyrdom, had they been called to it, are not excluded; that, therefore, all the saints shall be raised from the dead, as the apostle says, 'The dead in Christ shall rise first,'<sup>o</sup> that is, a thousand years before the wicked; that this event is intended by what is styled 'the first resurrection;' and that the saints shall not rise to be received immediately into heaven, but shall be first openly acknowledged,

k Rev. xxi. 10—27.  
n Rev. xx. 4.

l 2 Pet. iii. 7, 13.  
o 1 Thess. iv. 16.

m Vide Burnet. Tellur. Theor. Lib. iv.



and acquitted by Christ, the Judge of all, and then reign with him on earth throughout the whole period of the thousand years.

Others suppose that, during the thousand years' reign, the public ordinances of God's worship, namely, the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the present order and discipline of churches, shall entirely cease. To this opinion they accommodate the sense of some scriptures; for example, that in which it is said, concerning the New Jerusalem, that 'there was no temple therein,' that 'the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it;'<sup>p</sup> and that in which the apostle says, that the church, in celebrating the Lord's Supper, was to 'show the Lord's death till he come.'<sup>q</sup> They suppose the meaning of the latter scripture to be that the church was to observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper till he shall come to reign upon earth, and no longer.

There are some who entertain very carnal notions of the saints' reigning with Christ, inconsistent with perfect holiness; and who speak of pleasures they shall then enjoy which are more agreeable to Mahomet's paradise than to the life of saints admitted to those privileges which they suppose them to be partakers of. Some proceed yet further in their wild and ungrounded fancies, and think that a small number of the wicked shall be left in the world to be, as it were, slaves to the saints. But all these notions are inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. Such extremes many who have defended Christ's personal reign on earth, have unwarily run into; among whom are some ancient writers, who have led the way to others, who speak of it as the generally received opinion of the Fathers in the three first centuries.<sup>r</sup> These Fathers, however, are not much to be depended on, as to the sense they give of scripture, any more than those who have lived in later ages; especially in those things which they advance that seem to be inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. But if their general account of the thousand years' reign appear to be contrary to scripture, what they farther say concerning it, as well as others who improve upon their scheme, is much more remote from it, when they speak of the building of Jerusalem, of that being the principal seat of Christ's reign, and of several things of such a nature and containing so great a reproach on Christ's kingdom, that I forbear to mention them, while I suppose that there are very few who will think them consistent with the character of saints. These things gave disgust to Augustin, who, at first, adhered to their opinion, but afterwards was justly prejudiced against it.<sup>s</sup>

We have thus given a brief account of the different sentiments of many who treat in their writings of Christ's personal reign. Some are maintained by persons of

<sup>p</sup> Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 26.

<sup>r</sup> Justin Martyr seems to speak of it, not only as his own opinion, but as that which was generally held by the orthodox in his day, joins the belief of it with that of the resurrection of the dead, and supposes it to be founded on the writings of some of the prophets. Vid. Justin Martyr. *Dinlog. cum Tryph. Jud.* page 307. Εγω δε, και η τις ισιν ορθογνομεις κατα παντα Χριστιανοι, και σερχος αναστασιν γινωσκισθαι πισταμινα, και χιλια ιτην Ιερουσαλημ οικοδορηθησιν και κοσμηθησιν και πλατυνησιν, οι προφηται Ιεζεχην, και Ησαϊας, και οι αλλοι ομολογουσιν. Irenæus (Vid. *advers. Hæc. lib. v. cap. 33.*) not only gives into this opinion, but intimates, that it was brought into the church before his time, by one Papias, contemporary with Polycarp, and that he received it from those who had it imparted to them by the apostle John. But Eusebius, (Vid. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 33.*) though he speaks concerning this Papias, as one who was intimate with Polycarp, yet represents him as a very weak man, so that there is little credit to be given to his account of this matter, as agreeable to the apostle's sentiments or writings. Irenæus himself, in the place before-mentioned, cites a passage out of the same author, which he pretends he received from those that had it from the apostle John, concerning a certain time, in which there shall be vines which will produce ten thousand branches, and each of these as many smaller branches, and each of these small branches have ten thousand twigs, and every twig shall bear ten thousand clusters of grapes, and every cluster ten thousand grapes. This shows that the man was ready to swallow any fable he heard; and, if it was told him so, his fathering it upon the apostle discovers how little credit was to be given to what he says concerning this opinion, especially as he explains it as transmitted to the church by the apostle John. Tertullian also is mentioned as giving some occasional hints, which show that he was of this opinion. And Laetantius, who, in his Ciceronian style, describes the happy condition that the church shall be in, (without having much regard to those spiritual privileges that it shall enjoy, in which sense the predictions of the prophets, concerning it, are principally to be understood), takes his plan more especially from some things that are said concerning it, in the Sybilline oracles. Vid. Lactant. *de Vitâ Beat. lib. vii. cap. 24. et Epitom. cap. 11.*

<sup>s</sup> Vid. Aug. *de Civ. Dei, lib. xx. cap. 7.*

great worth and judgment, and seem more agreeable to the sense of those scriptures which are brought to defend them, than others. These ought to be farther considered, that it may appear whether they are just or not. As for those which can hardly be called any other than romantic, and have little more to support them than the ungrounded conjectures of those who advance them, and are so far from agreeing with the general scope and design of scripture, that they contain a reflection on the methods of Christ's government, rather than an expedient to advance it, they carry in themselves their own confutation, and nothing farther needs be said in opposition to them. Before we proceed to consider how far Christ's reign on earth may be defended, and in what other respects several things which are asserted relating to some circumstances which they suppose will attend it, do not seem to be sufficiently founded on scripture, we shall take leave to premise some things, in general, relating to the method in which this subject ought to be managed.

So far as scripture plainly gives countenance to the doctrine in general, that the administration of Christ's government, in this world, shall be attended with great glory, and shall abundantly tend to the advantage of his church, it is a subject of too great importance to be passed over with neglect, as if we had no manner of concern in it, or as if it were a matter of mere speculation; for certainly all scripture is written for our learning, and ought to be studied and improved by us, to the glory of God, and our own edification. As to those texts which speak of Christ's government as exercised in this world, not only do they contain matters awful and sublime, but our having just ideas of these will be a direction to our faith, when we pray for the farther advancement of Christ's kingdom, as we are bound daily to do. We must take heed, however, that we do not give too great scope to our fancy, by framing imaginary schemes of our own, and then bringing in scripture, not without some violence offered to the sense of it, to give countenance to them. Nor ought we to acquiesce in such a sense of scripture, brought to support this doctrine, as is evidently contrary to other scriptures, or to the nature and spirituality of Christ's government. We must also take it for granted, that some of those scriptures which relate to this matter are hard to be understood, and that, therefore, a humble modesty becomes us in treating it, rather than to censure those who differ from us, as if they had departed from that faith which is founded on the most obvious and plain sense of scripture, especially if they maintain nothing which is derogatory to the glory of Christ. This rule we shall endeavour to observe, in what remains to be considered on this subject.

As most allow that there is a sense in which Christ's kingdom shall be attended with greater circumstances of glory than it is at present, we shall proceed to show how it shall be advanced, in this lower world, beyond what it is at present; and we shall show this in a way which agrees very well with the sense of several scriptures relating to the subject, without going into some extremes which many have run into who plead for Christ's personal reign on earth in a way in which it cannot easily be defended. We freely own, as what we think agreeable to scripture, that as Christ has, in all ages, displayed his glory as King of the church, so we have ground to conclude, from scripture, that the administration of his government in this world, before his coming to judgment, will be attended with greater magnificence, more visible marks of glory, and various occurrences of providence, which shall tend to the welfare and happiness of his church, in a greater degree than has been beheld or experienced by it, since it was planted by the ministry of the apostles after his ascension into heaven. This we think to be the sense, in general, of those scriptures, both in the Old and in the New Testament, which speak of the latter-day glory. Some of the prophets seem to look farther than the first preaching of the gospel, and the glorious display of Christ's government which attended it. These were, in part, an accomplishment of some of their predictions, but they were not wholly so; for there are some expressions made use of by them which seem as yet not to have had their accomplishment. Of the former kind are the expressions of the prophet Isaiah, when he speaks of 'the glory of the Lord, as arising,' and being 'seen upon' the church, and of the 'Gentiles coming to this light,' and 'kings to the brightness of it;' and many other things to the same purpose, which



denote the glorious privileges that the gospel-church should enjoy. Though these, in a spiritual sense, may, in a great measure, be supposed to be already accomplished; yet there are other things which he foretells concerning the church which do not yet appear to have had their accomplishment. He says, for example, 'Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night,'<sup>u</sup> as denoting the church's being perfectly free from all those afflictive dispensations of providence which should tend to hinder the preaching and success of the gospel. He says, also, 'Violence shall be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders;'<sup>x</sup> by which he intends the church's perfect freedom from all persecution. He says farther, 'The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.'<sup>y</sup> This is so far from having been yet accomplished, that it seems to refer to the same thing which is mentioned concerning the New Jerusalem,<sup>z</sup> and almost expressed in the same words: which, if it be not a metaphorical description of the heavenly state, has a peculiar reference to the latter-day glory. The prophet again adds, 'Thy people shall be all righteous,' denoting that holiness should almost universally obtain in the world, as much as iniquity has abounded in it,—an event which does not appear to have yet taken place. Again, when the prophet Micah speaks of 'the mountain of the house of the Lord being established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills,' and says, that 'people should flow unto it,'<sup>a</sup> though this, and some other things which he there mentions, may refer to the first preaching of the gospel, and the success of it; yet the words which follow cannot be so understood: 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; and nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.'<sup>b</sup> This prophecy, so far as it may be taken otherwise than in a spiritual sense, seems to imply a greater degree of peace and tranquillity than the gospel-church has hitherto enjoyed. Hence, when he says that this shall be 'in the last days,'<sup>c</sup> we have reason to conclude that he does not mean merely the last or gospel-dispensation, which commenced on our Saviour's ascension into heaven, but the last period of that dispensation, or the time which we are now considering. As to the account we have of this period in the New Testament, especially in many places in the Book of Revelation, which speak of 'the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ,' and of his 'taking to himself his great power and reigning,'<sup>d</sup> and of the thousand years' reign;<sup>e</sup> whatever be the sense of these passages, as to some circumstances of glory which shall attend this administration of the affairs of his kingdom, they certainly have not yet had their accomplishment; and they, therefore, lead us to expect that Christ's kingdom shall be attended with greater degrees of glory redounding to himself, which we call the latter-day glory.

When this period of greater glory shall arrive, many privileges will redound to the church. As Christ is said to reign on earth, so the saints are represented as reigning with him. They say, 'Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth;'<sup>f</sup> and elsewhere, when the apostle speaks of Christ's reigning 'a thousand years,' he adds, that 'they shall reign with him.'<sup>g</sup> This cannot be understood in any other sense than that of a spiritual reign, agreeably to the nature of Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world. We have, hence, sufficient ground to conclude, that, when these prophecies shall have their accomplishment, the interest of Christ shall be the prevailing interest in the world, which it has never yet been in all respects; so that godliness shall be as much and as universally valued and esteemed, as it has hitherto been decried, and it shall be reckoned as great an honour to be a Christian, as it has, in the most degenerate age of the church, been matter of reproach. We may add, that the church shall have a perfect freedom from persecution in all parts of the world; that a greater

u Isa. lv. 11. and the same mode of speaking is used, concerning the New Jerusalem, in Rev. xvi. 25. x Verse 18. y Verse 19. z Rev. xxi. 23. a Micah iv. 1  
b Micah iv. 3, 4. c Verse 1. d Rev. xi. 15, 17. e Chap. xx. f Rev. v. 10.  
g Rev. xx. 6.

glory shall be put on the ordinances; and that more success shall attend them than has hitherto been experienced. In short, there shall be, as it were, an universal spread of religion and holiness to the Lord, throughout the world. When this glorious dispensation shall commence, we have sufficient ground to conclude, that, the anti-christian powers having been wholly subdued, the Jews shall be converted. This may be inferred from the order in which this event is foretold in the book of Revelation. The fall and utter ruin of Babylon are first predicted.<sup>h</sup> Afterwards we read of 'the marriage of the Lamb being come,'<sup>i</sup> of 'his wife having made herself ready,' and of others, who are styled 'blessed,' being 'called to the marriage-supper.'<sup>k</sup> This, as an ingenious and learned writer observes,<sup>l</sup> seems to be a prediction of the call of the Jews, and of the saints and faithful, namely, the gospel-church, who were converted before this time, being, together with the Jews, made partakers of the spiritual privileges of Christ's kingdom, and so invited to the marriage-supper. Accordingly, by 'the Lamb's wife,' is intended the converted Jews, who are considered as espoused to him. As their being 'ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, and not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God,'<sup>m</sup> occasioned their being rejected; so, when they are converted, and their new espousals are celebrated, it is particularly observed that this righteousness shall be their greatest glory, the robe that they shall be adorned with. Hence, when the bride is said to have made herself ready, it is added, 'To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.'<sup>n</sup> This prophecy, being placed immediately before the account of the thousand years' reign,<sup>o</sup> gives ground to conclude that the conversion of the Jews shall be before it, or an introduction to it.

I am sensible there are some who question whether those prophecies, especially such as are found in the Old Testament, which foretell the conversion of the Jews, had not their full accomplishment in the beginning of the gospel-state, when many churches were gathered out of the Jews, and some of the apostles were sent to exercise their ministry in those parts of the world where the greatest number of them resided; on which account Peter is called the apostle of the Jews, for 'God wrought effectually in him to the apostleship of the circumcision,'<sup>p</sup> and he, together with James and John, directed their inspired epistles to them in particular. But we reply, that there are some scriptures in the New Testament relating to this matter, which do not seem as yet to have been accomplished, but which respect this glorious dispensation, in which there shall be, as it were, an universal conversion of them in the latter-day. Thus the apostle says, 'If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?'<sup>q</sup> And he adds, 'I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.'<sup>r</sup> This seems, as yet, not to have been accomplished. As to those scriptures in the Old Testament which predict many things in favour of the Jewish nation, though I will not deny that many of them had their accomplishment, either in their return from the Babylonish captivity, or in those who were converted in the beginning of the gospel-dispensation, yet I cannot think that they all had. The prophet Hosea seems to foretell some things which are yet to come, when he speaks of them as being 'many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.'<sup>s</sup> This seems to point at the condition in which they now are. But he adds, 'Afterwards the children of Israel shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King,' that is, Christ, 'and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.' This seems to intend their conversion, which is yet expected. Thus far our faith, as to this matter, may be said to be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. But, if we pretend to deter-

h Rev. xviii. i Chap. xix. k Verses 7, 9. l Vid. Mede Comment. min. in Apocal. cap. xix. and Dr. More and others, who are of the same opinion as to this matter.  
 Apocal. cap. x. 3. n Rev. xix. 8. o Chap. xx. p Gal. ii. 8. q Rom. xi. 15.  
 r Verses 25, 26. s Hos. iii. 4.



mine the way and manner in which this shall be done, we must have recourse to uncertain conjectures, instead of solid arguments. The learned writer whom I formerly mentioned,<sup>t</sup> gives his opinion about it; which I will not pretend to disprove, though the ingenuity of it is more to be valued than its convincing evidence. He supposes it shall be somewhat like the conversion of the apostle Paul, by Christ's appearing with a glorious light on earth, and then retiring again to heaven. But in the particular circumstance of providence which related to Paul's conversion, Christ seems to have had another end to answer, namely, the qualifying of him for the apostleship by the extraordinary sight of him; and the accommodating of this matter as an argument that the Jews shall be converted in a similar manner, proves nothing at all. The best way, therefore, is to leave this among the secrets which belong not to us to inquire after.<sup>u</sup>

To what we have said concerning the conversion of the Jews, as what is expected to go immediately before those glorious times which we are speaking of, we may add, that there shall be a greater spread of the gospel through the dark parts of the earth. Accordingly, the scripture which was just referred to, concerning 'the Gentiles coming to the light' of this glorious morning, or 'the forces of the Gentiles' coming unto the church,<sup>x</sup> shall have a fuller accomplishment than hitherto it has had; as also another scripture, in which the prophet says, that 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'<sup>y</sup> We will not deny that this had, in part, an accomplishment, when the gospel was preached by the apostles. Indeed, the prophet intimates that these things should come to pass when 'a rod should come forth out of the stem of Jesse,'<sup>z</sup> that is, after Christ's incarnation, who was of the seed of David, according to the flesh. Hence, I cannot but think that the words, 'in that day,' which we often meet with in scripture,<sup>a</sup> signify the whole gospel-dispensation, from the beginning of it to its consummation in Christ's coming to judgment; and then we may look for some things which the prophet here foretells, as what should come to pass in one part of it, and other things in another. As to the knowledge of Christ being so extensive that it is said to 'cover the earth,' or Christ's being elsewhere said to be 'a light to the Gentiles,' though the expressions denote the first success of the gospel in the conversion of the Gentiles, they do not argue that the texts in which they occur shall not have a farther accomplishment, when those other things shall come to pass which the prophet mentions in the foregoing verses, under the metaphor of 'the wolf dwelling with the lamb,' &c. and other things which relate to a more peaceable state of the church than it has hitherto experienced. It thus seems sufficiently evident, that, when this happy time shall come, the interest of Christ shall be the prevailing interest in the world, and that the glory of his kingdom shall be more eminently displayed than at pre-

<sup>t</sup> See Mede's Works, book iv. Epist. 17. p. 938—940.

<sup>u</sup> As for the story which Mede relates, to give countenance to this opinion, concerning Christ's appearing in a glorious manner upon the Jews demanding such an extraordinary event, after a public disputation, held three days, between Gregentius, an Arabian Bishop, and Herbanus, a Jew, a multitude of spectators being present, both Jews and Christians, and signifying that he was the same Person whom their fathers had crucified, and their being first struck blind, as Paul was, and then, like him, converted and baptized, there are several things in the account which seem fabulous and incredible. Though it is not improbable that there was a disputation held between Gregentius and the Jews, about the truth of the Christian religion, about the year of our Lord 470, or, as others suppose, 570; yet it is much to be questioned, whether the account we have of it be not spurious, written by one who calls himself by that name, in Greek, about three or four hundred years since; especially as so extraordinary a miracle, wrought in an age when miracles had, for so considerable a time ceased, is not taken notice of by other writers of more reputation in the age in which it is said to have been wrought, particularly as it would have been one of the most extraordinary proofs of the Christian religion which have been given since our Saviour's time. It is very strange, too, that five millions and a half of the Jews should have been converted at once, by this miracle, and yet the thing be passed over in silence by other writers. It is very much to be questioned, likewise, whether there were such a multitude of Jews gathered together in one kingdom, and indeed, whether that kingdom consisted of such a number of people. If, too, there were so many Jews, we must suppose that there was an equal number of Christians present; but that so many should be present at one disputation, seems incredible to a very great degree. Vid. Gregen. disputat. cum I. I. fol. 192. et 200. et Cave. Hist. lit. Tom. i. p. 363.

<sup>x</sup> Isa. lx. 3. 5.

<sup>y</sup> Chap. xi. 9.

<sup>z</sup> Verse 1.

<sup>a</sup> Verses 10, 11.

sent it is. In these respects, we are far from denying the reign of Christ in this world, for we think it plainly contained in scripture. There are, however, in the scheme of many who maintain this doctrine, several things which we do not think sufficiently founded in scripture.

We cannot see sufficient reason to conclude that, when Christ is said eminently to reign in the earth, he shall appear visibly, or, as they call it, personally, in his human nature. If they intended nothing else, by Christ's appearing visibly, or personally, but his farther evincing his mediatorial glory in the effects of his power and grace which his church shall experience, as it does now, though in a less degree, or if they should say that some greater circumstances of glory will then attend his reign, their opinion would not be in the least denied. But more than this we cannot allow. For the presence of Christ's human nature on earth would not contribute so much to the church's spiritual edification and happiness, as his presence by the powerful influence of his Holy Spirit would do. This is sufficiently evident; for when he dwelt on earth, immediately after his incarnation, his ministry was not attended with that success which might have been expected; which gave him occasion to complain, as the prophet represents him to do, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, Israel is not gathered.' Upon this, he is, as it were, comforted with the thought, that, notwithstanding, he should 'be glorious in the eyes of the Lord,' that is, accepted of, and afterwards glorified by him; and that he should be 'given for a light to the Gentiles,'<sup>b</sup> that is, that the gospel should be preached to all nations, and that then greater success should attend it. Now this is owing to Christ's presence by his Spirit; so that, if that be poured forth in a more plentiful degree on his church, it will contribute more to the increase of its graces and spiritual comforts, than his presence, in his human nature, could do without it. It cannot be argued, therefore, that Christ's presence, in such a way, is absolutely necessary to the flourishing state of the church, to that degree in which it is expected in the latter-day. The presence of his human nature on earth, it is true, was absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of redemption, or for purchasing his people to himself by his death; but his presence in heaven, appearing as an Advocate for them, and, in consequence, sending down his Spirit to work all grace in their souls, is, in its kind, also necessary. Thus our Saviour intimates to his disciples, immediately before his ascension into heaven, when he says, 'It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come.'<sup>c</sup> Now, if there are some peculiar advantages redounding to the church from Christ's continuance in heaven, as well as his ascending up into it, it is not reasonable to suppose that the church's happiness, as to their spiritual concerns, should arise so much from his coming thence into this world, as it does from those continued powerful influences of the Holy Spirit which are said to depend upon, and be the consequence of, his sitting at the right hand of God in heaven.—Again, if he should appear on earth in his human nature, he must either divest himself of that celestial glory which he is there clothed with, agreeably to the heavenly state, or his people, with whom he is supposed to reign, must have such a change made in their nature that their bodies will be rendered celestial, and their souls enlarged in proportion to the heavenly state; otherwise they would not be fit to converse with him, in an immediate way, by reason of the present frailty of their nature. Of this we have various instances in scripture. When Moses saw God's 'back-parts,' that is, some extraordinary emblematical display of his glory, God tells him, 'Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live;' and it follows, that while this glory passed by him, 'God put him in a cleft of the rock, and covered him with his hand;'<sup>d</sup> and he assigns as a reason for this, that his face should not be seen. Moses could not, because of the imperfection of the present state, behold the extraordinary emblematic displays of the divine glory, without the frame of nature being broken. On this account, Augustin says, understanding the words in this sense, 'Lord, let me die, that I may see thee.'<sup>e</sup> When, likewise, Christ appeared, in the glory of his human nature, to the apostle

<sup>b</sup> Isa. xlix. 4—6.

<sup>e</sup> Moriar ut videam.

<sup>c</sup> John xvi. 7.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 20—23.



Paul at his conversion, Paul 'fell to the earth, trembling and astonished,'<sup>f</sup> not being able to converse with him. Afterwards, too, when the same apostle was caught up into 'the third heaven,' and had a view of its glory, this was greater than his frail nature could bear, and he says that 'whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell.'<sup>g</sup> John, the beloved disciple, also, who conversed familiarly with him when in his humbled state, and 'leaned on his breast at supper,'<sup>h</sup> when Christ appeared to him in a glorious emblematical way after his ascension, says, 'When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.'<sup>i</sup> And the apostle Paul says, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him' so 'no more,'<sup>k</sup> that is, whilst we are in this world, inasmuch as we are incapable of conversing with him in his glorified human nature. He says, likewise, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God';<sup>l</sup> that is, man in the present state cannot enjoy those privileges which are reserved for him in heaven, which include a conversing with Christ in his human nature, as well as with others who are inhabitants of heaven.—Further, if we suppose that Christ will reign personally on earth, it must be farther inquired, whether they who reign with him during this period of time shall die or not. If not, their being exempt from death seems contrary to the fixed laws of nature, and also to the present state as mortal, and as opposed to a state of immortality and eternal life. But if they shall die, then they must necessarily lose one great advantage which they now enjoy in dying, namely, 'being with Christ';<sup>m</sup> for when they die, they must, in some respect, be said to depart from Christ; and, whatever advantage the presence of the human nature of Christ is of to the inhabitants of heaven, that they must be supposed to be deprived of, whilst he is reigning on earth. These, and other things to the same purpose, are consequences of Christ's personal reign in his human nature on earth, on account of which we cannot acquiesce in the opinion.

There is another thing which we cannot approve of, in the fore-mentioned scheme relating to Christ's thousand years' reign on earth,—the assertion of several things concerning the conversion of the Jews, which seem contrary to the analogy of faith. We have already taken it for granted that the Jews shall be converted when this glorious reign begins, or immediately before it. But there are several things added to this which, we think, there is no ground from scripture to maintain. It is asserted, for example, that, after the Jews are converted, they shall continue a distinct body of people, governed by their own laws, as they were before Christ's incarnation. But we rather conclude, that they shall be joined to and become one body with the Christian church, all marks of distinction being laid aside; and shall be grafted into the same olive-tree,<sup>n</sup> that is, into Christ; for certainly the middle wall of partition, which was taken away by Christ, shall never be set up again. This seems to be intended by our Saviour's words, 'There shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.'<sup>o</sup>—But besides this, there are several objectionable things asserted concerning the Jews' rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, and concerning that city being the principal seat of Christ's reign, where the saints shall reside and reign with him. Now, the temple was designed as a place of worship only during the dispensation before Christ's incarnation, and was, in some respects, a type of his dwelling among us in our nature. The temple-service, too, as it is now abolished, so it shall continue to be till the end of the world; and then, what occasion will there be for a temple to be built? As for Jerusalem being rebuilt, or the land of Judea being the principal seat of Christ's kingdom on earth, we humbly conceive the supposition to be ungrounded, or to be based on a mistaken view of the sense of some scriptures in the Old Testament which were literally fulfilled in the building of Jerusalem after the Babylonish captivity, and which have no reference to any thing now to come. As for the land of Canaan, though it had a glory put on it some ages before our Saviour's incarnation, as being the scene of many wonderful dispensations of providence in favour of that people, while they remained distinct from all other nations in the world; yet we cannot conclude that it shall

f Acts ix. 4. 6.  
the foregoing verses.  
n Rom. xi. 24.

g 2 Cor. xii. 2.  
k 2 Cor. v. 16.  
o John x. 16.

h John xxi. 20.  
l 1 Cor. xv. 50.

i Rev. i. 17, compared with  
m Phil. i. 23.

be a distinct place of residence for them when, being converted, they are joined to the Christian church. The land of Canaan will be no more accounted of, than any other part of the world. Considering also the smallness of the place, we cannot think it sufficient to contain the great number of those who, together with the Jews, shall be the happy subjects of Christ's kingdom.

There is another thing in which we cannot agree with some who treat of Christ's reign on earth, namely, their supposing that the saints who are to reign with him, are to be in a sinless state, little short of the heavenly. On this point, it is true, they are much divided in their sentiments. But some assert, that the saints shall be free from all the remains of corruption. Indeed, their argument leads them to this, if we consider the saints as raised from the dead, and their souls brought back from heaven, on their entering which they were perfectly freed from sin. It follows from this opinion that there will be no room for the mortification of sin, striving against it, or resisting those temptations which we are now liable to from it. This we cannot believe to be a privilege which any have ground to expect while in this world. Indeed, those graces whereby we subdue our corruptions or strive against temptations, are peculiarly adapted to the present state, in opposition to the heavenly. Moreover, when some say that the reign shall be such that the saints shall be free from all manner of trouble, internal or external, personal or relative, at least so long as Satan is bound, that is, to the end of these thousand years; they appear to assert more than Christ has given his people ground to expect. He tells them, that, 'in the world they shall have,' at least, some degree of 'tribulation';<sup>p</sup> and that for a perfect freedom from it, they must wait till they come to heaven.

We cannot think, moreover, as some do, that, during the thousand years' reign, the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments shall cease, and that all other laws and ordinances which Christ has ordained for gathering and building up particular churches, for bringing in his elect, and for propagating his name and interest in the world, shall be discontinued, as if there would be no occasion for them. This is what we think altogether ungrounded; for we cannot but suppose that, as soon as the whole number of the election of grace are brought in, and thereby the end and design of the preaching the gospel is answered, or when Christ can say, 'Here am I, and all that thou hast given me,' he will present them to the Father, and so receive his militant church into a triumphant state in heaven. Indeed, it seems a very weak foundation on which this part of their scheme depends, when they say that those texts which speak of Christ's 'being with' his ministers 'to the end of the world,'<sup>q</sup> and of his death being in the Lord's Supper commemorated 'till he come,'<sup>r</sup> relate to the coming of Christ in the millennium. This seems a very strained and forced sense of these passages. As for the scripture in which it is said that 'the New Jerusalem had no temple,' and that it had 'no need of the sun, nor the moon, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof,'<sup>s</sup> this must not be brought to prove that the ordinances of divine worship shall cease during the thousand years' reign, unless it can first be made to appear that the New Jerusalem has reference to the subject. Some, on the contrary, think that the Holy Ghost is here describing the heavenly state; and their opinion agrees well with the connection of the passage with what is mentioned in the preceding chapter. Now, if this sense of the passage be admitted, the glory which the church shall then arrive to, is such as shall be after the final judgment; so that the passage is a description of the glorious state of Christ's kingdom in heaven, rather than on earth.

We have thus shown what we think to be the general design of those scriptures which speak of Christ's reigning in or over the earth, and of the happy state of the church at that time. We have also endeavoured to prove, that several additional circumstances, which some suppose will attend it, are not sufficiently founded in scripture, and seem, in some respects, inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, as well as with the ground we have to expect that the present mode of administration and its laws and ordinances shall continue as long as the world en-



dures. We shall now consider the sense which the millenarians give of some scriptures on which the main stress of their argument depends, together with the inconclusiveness of their reasoning from them, and also in what sense we apprehend those scriptures are to be understood.

As to their view of 'the first resurrection,' they found it on that scripture, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath a part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.'<sup>t</sup> A learned and judicious writer<sup>u</sup> supposes that the first resurrection shall be only of the martyrs; that it is to be understood in a literal sense; that it shall open the scene of Christ's thousand years' reign; that the second resurrection shall be at the close of that reign, when the whole world shall be raised from the dead; and that then shall follow the final judgment. But he differs from many of the ancient and modern millenarians in saying that he dares not so much as imagine that Christ shall visibly converse with men on earth; for his kingdom ever hath been, and shall be, of such a nature that his throne and kingly residence are in heaven. He says also that, though the deceased martyrs shall re-assume their bodies and reign, yet it shall be in heaven; while the saints who shall be then living, and have not worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark, shall reign on earth; for he supposes the scripture which relates to this matter to contain a vision of two distinct things,—one respecting those who 'were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,' and who lived and reigned with Christ, but not on earth,—the other respecting those who, though they had not suffered, had 'not worshipped the beast, nor his image,' and who also reigned during this thousand years, not in heaven, but on earth. These are considered as in their way to heaven; the other, as received into the heavenly country, as a peculiar prerogative conferred upon them, in reward of their martyrdom. He supposes that this first resurrection is not opposed to any article of faith, and that it may be as well defended, in a literal sense, as the resurrection we read of in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, in which 'the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of their graves, after Christ's resurrection.' With a becoming modesty, he cites Augustin's words to the effect,<sup>x</sup> that if nothing more were meant by the doctrine of the first resurrection than that the delights of Christ's kingdom are spiritual, the opinion would be tolerable, and was once entertained by that Father. He thus says as much as can be said in defence of this opinion; and nothing is wanting to support his argument, but sufficient evidence that the text must necessarily be taken in a literal sense. But when others proceed much farther, and conclude that Christ shall appear visibly on earth, and that the design of the first resurrection is, that they who shall be raised from the dead should live on earth, we see far less reason to believe this to be the sense of the passage in which the first resurrection is mentioned, and accordingly shall take leave to consider what may be said in opposition to it.

Now, if the saints shall be raised, their bodies must either be corruptible and mortal, or incorruptible and immortal. To suppose that they shall be raised corruptible and mortal, and consequently liable to the other infirmities of life, is to suppose their resurrection to be of the same kind with that of Lazarus and others who were raised by our Saviour. But this is so unaccordant with the character of saints, raised from the dead to reign with Christ, that it is not generally asserted by those who treat on this subject. The saints must hence be raised incorruptible and immortal. If so, it follows, that this world will not be a place fit for their abode; for they shall be raised with celestial bodies, and so fitted to inhabit the heavenly mansions. Nor will those accommodations, which this earth affords, the food it produces, or those other conveniences which we enjoy in it, by the blessing of providence, be suitable to persons who are raised up in a state of perfection, as they must be supposed to be, or, as the apostle styles it, 'raised in glory.' Besides, as they will be appointed to live and converse with men in this world, I cannot see how there can be any conversation between them and others who continue

<sup>t</sup> Rev. xx. 6.

<sup>u</sup> Vid. Mede de Resurrec. prim. lib. iii. pp. 710, 749, 750.

<sup>x</sup> Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xx. cap. 7.

to live in this world, and who are not, like them, raised from the dead, but retain their present mortal frame. If their 'vile bodies,' as the apostle says concerning the bodies of the saints, shall, when raised from the dead, 'be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body,'<sup>1</sup> how can weak frail creatures intimately converse with them? It may be said, indeed, that they shall be raised only with such a glory as shall defer their transformation into the likeness of Christ's present body, till they are translated to heaven, as was true with respect to our Saviour's human nature after his resurrection. But though this is possible, it seems not to accord with the account we have of the circumstances of glory with which the saints shall be raised from the dead. But what seems to make the opinion as to a literal first resurrection more improbable, is, that it is inconsistent with that state of blessedness into which the saints have been admitted, namely, in their souls, wherein they have been in the immediate vision and fruition of God. They are as travellers arrived at their journey's end, and wanting nothing to complete their blessedness but their resurrection, and now they are supposed to be raised from the dead. Yet their blessedness is diminished by their being appointed to live in this world, and, as we may say, to leave that better country in which they have been, to re-assume the character and condition of pilgrims and sojourners upon earth. It will be objected, that we may as reasonably suppose that these saints shall be raised in circumstances fit to converse with the rest of the world, as any who have been raised from the dead have formerly been. I cannot deny that this is possible; yet it does not seem probable, inasmuch as they shall not be raised from the dead for the same end and design that others have been, that the power of God might be illustrated, or some contested truth confirmed, but that some special honour or privilege might be conferred on them, as the reward of their former sufferings. Moreover, what valuable end is answered by their change of condition, which might, in some measure, tend to justify the assertion as to a first resurrection? Must they live here, that they might perform an extraordinary ministry, to promote the edification of their mortal brethren, whom they found living upon earth? This was not absolutely necessary; for God has appointed other ways for the edification of his church. And, if he did not think fit, before, to send down ministers from heaven to preach the gospel to them, but ordained the common method of preaching it by others less qualified for this work, who are subject to like infirmities with those to whom they preach; why should we suppose such an alteration in the method of divine providence on this particular occasion? If we suppose, too, that they shall continue on earth till Christ's appearing to judgment, then it must be argued that they were sent hither not only to be helpers of the faith of others who live here, but to be exposed, in common with them, to a second warfare upon earth,—not, indeed, with flesh and blood, but with those who are represented, in the same chapter in which the first resurrection and the thousand years' reign are mentioned, as 'compassing the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city;' and therefore they are called back from a triumphant to a militant state. It may be said, indeed, that they shall be admitted into heaven before this battle begin; but that can hardly be supposed. For if God send them to be companions with his mortal saints, in their prosperous state, will he call them away when the time of their greatest danger approaches, in which their presence might be of the greatest service to their brethren who are left to struggle with these difficulties? Upon the whole, therefore, we cannot suppose that any shall, in a literal sense, be raised from the dead, till this glorious though spiritual reign of Christ shall be at an end, and the day of judgment draws nigh. This opinion agrees with the general scope of all those scriptures which speak of the resurrection and final judgment.

It will be objected that the scripture elsewhere intimates that there shall be two resurrections; for the apostle says that 'the dead in Christ shall rise first.'<sup>2</sup> Why, then, it will be asked, may not this first resurrection be understood in the same sense with that mentioned in Rev. xx. which has been already considered? Now, we do not deny that the resurrection of which the apostle speaks must be taken in a literal sense; but let it be observed, that, in connexion with it, he does not men-



tion anything of the thousand years' reign, but speaks of the day of judgment, when 'Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel.' With this the glory of that day shall begin; and then the dead shall be raised, in which the saints and faithful shall have the pre-eminence. They shall 'rise first,' that is, before others,—mentioned in the following verse, 'that are alive, who shall be caught up with them in the clouds.' They shall rise also before the wicked shall be raised, to the end that, when Christ appears, 'they,' as it is said elsewhere, 'may appear with him in glory,' and that they may bear a part in the solemnity of that day, and be happy in his presence, when others are raised to 'shame and everlasting contempt,' and filled with the utmost confusion and distress. [See Note 3 S, page 577.] Moreover, the resurrection, or the raising first, of those that died in Christ, is not particularly applied to those who suffered martyrdom for him; much less is there any account of its being a thousand years before the general resurrection. It may, therefore, very well be understood of a resurrection a very short time before it; and consequently gives no countenance to the opinion which has been already considered concerning this resurrection, as going before the reign of Christ on earth.

There is another scripture brought in defence of another part of the millenarians' scheme. It is that in which the apostle speaks of the creatures' present bondage, and future deliverance, and of their 'waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies.'<sup>a</sup> This, they suppose, will have its accomplishment when this reign of Christ begins. But I cannot think that the apostle, in that scripture, intends anything else, but that the whole creation is liable, at present, to the curse consequent upon man's fall; and that the deliverance he speaks of shall be at the general resurrection, when the saints shall be raised immortal and incorruptible, which is what they now wait and hope for.

We have thus considered the sense which is given of some scriptures, by those who understand the reign of Christ on earth as attended with various circumstances which we cannot readily allow of. We have shown that some of those texts which are usually brought to support that particular scheme, have reference to the return of the Jews from captivity;<sup>b</sup> that others which predict their building of Jerusalem, and the temple there,<sup>c</sup> and the setting up of their civil and religious polity, had their accomplishment after their return from the Babylonish captivity; and that those which seem to look farther, and respect some privileges which they shall enjoy in the last days, will be fulfilled when they are converted to Christianity, and made partakers of many spiritual privileges, in common with the gospel-church. I now need mention only two scriptures more, which we understand in a sense very different from what some do, who treat of Christ's reign on earth. One of these scriptures is 2 Pet. iii. 10—13; and the other is Rev. xx. 4, 5.

A few millenarians, as was formerly observed, who give a scope to their wit and fancy beyond all the bounds of modesty, and do not consider the absurdities which will follow from their opinion, have maintained that there shall be a general conflagration immediately before Christ's reign on earth begins. The scripture they bring for that purpose, is that in which the apostle says, 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' This scripture, it must be confessed, is hard to be understood. We are far from thinking, as some do, that it is only a metaphorical description of some remarkable providences, tending to the ruin of Christ's enemies, and the advantage of his people. Certainly the words are to be taken in a literal sense; for the apostle had been speaking, in the foregoing verses, 'of the old world,' which, 'being overflowed with water, perished.' This is, without doubt, to be taken in a literal sense; and now he speaks, as some call it, of a second deluge, which shall be, not by water, but by fire,<sup>d</sup> 'in which the heavens and the earth shall pass away,' or be 'dissolved,' that is, changed as to their form, though not annihilated. By 'the

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 21—23.

<sup>c</sup> Jer. xxix. 5. Isa. xlv. 28.

<sup>b</sup> See Ezek. xxxvii. 21. and Jer. xxxvii. 7—13. et alibi passim.

<sup>d</sup> So Irenæus styles it, Adv. Hær. lib. v. cap. 29. Diluvium

superveniet ignis.

heavens and the earth,' the learned Mede well understands that part of the frame of nature which was subjected to the curse, or is inhabited by Christ's enemies. This includes the earth, water, and air, but not the heavenly bodies, which are not only at a vast distance from it, but, in comparison to which, it is little more than a point in magnitude. Mede also, notwithstanding some peculiarities held by him, as formerly mentioned, relating to the millennium, justly observes that this conflagration shall not be till the end of the world, and consequently shall be immediately before the day of judgment. Indeed, the apostle intimates as much, when he speaks of this awful providence as 'reserved to the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.'<sup>e</sup> The main difficulty to be accounted for, is, what is meant by 'the new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' which are appointed as an habitation for the righteous. Concerning these, if I may be allowed to give my opinion, with that humility and modesty which the difficulty of the subject calls for, I cannot think that there is any absurdity in supposing that the apostle means by them that, in consequence of a change of their form, they shall be an apartment of heaven in which, together with those other parts of the frame of nature which are designed to be the seat of the blessed, the saints shall dwell and reign with Christ for ever.

We shall now consider the sense which may be given of what we read in the twentieth chapter of Revelation concerning 'the first resurrection,' when the martyrs are said to live at the beginning of the thousand years' reign, and the rest of the dead not to live, till these thousand years are finished.<sup>f</sup> On this passage the stress of the whole controversy principally depends. Now, I cannot but adhere to their opinion who think that the words are to be understood in a metaphorical sense; and then they who were 'beheaded for the witness of Jesus,' that is, the martyrs, shall live when Christ's spiritual reign begins, that is, the cause for which they suffered martyrdom shall be revived. This is supposed to have been in a languishing and dying condition during the reign of Antichrist; and, towards the close of that reign, to have been at the lowest ebb, and, as it were, dead. I say, this shall be revived; these martyrs shall, as it were, live again,—not in their own persons, but in their successors, who espouse the same cause. Before this, the enemies of Christ and his gospel persecuted and trampled on his cause, insulted the memory of those that had suffered for it; but afterwards, when it is said, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen,' Christ's cause revives, and that which was victorious over it dies, and shall not rise again, or be in any capacity to give disturbance to the church, till the thousand years are finished, and Satan is loosed again out of prison, to give life and spirit to it. We then read of a new war begun, a fresh battle fought, 'the nations deceived, the camp of the saints compassed about;' and this will continue till Christ shall come, and put an end to it at the day of judgment, when the devil shall be 'cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.' In this sense some, not without ground, understand the account which is given of the 'slaying' and 'rising' of 'the witnesses,'<sup>g</sup> as signifying that the gospel, which before had been persecuted, and the preaching of it prohibited, shall then prevail without restraint. The witnesses' 'death,' denotes their being silenced; their 'rising' and 'standing upon their feet,' their having liberty again to preach. Why, then, may we not understand the resurrection, in the chapter we are now considering, in the same metaphorical sense? To understand it so, agrees very well with the sense of the sixth verse; in which it is said concerning those who 'have a part in the first resurrection,' that is, the saints, who live and reign with Christ, 'on such this second death hath no power,' that is, whatever the enemies of the church may attempt against them, after the thousand years' reign, shall be to no purpose, for they shall not prevail—the saints' cause shall never die again. Or, if it be applied to their persons, the meaning is, that they shall not die eternally. Eternal death is a punishment to be inflicted on their enemies, who shall 'be cast into the lake of fire,' which is expressly called 'the second death.'<sup>h</sup> But these, as is stated in Rev. ii. 11, shall not be hurt of it, that is, not exposed to it. As they have lived with Christ, in a spiritual sense, on



earth ; so they shall live with him for ever in heaven. We are, in giving this sense of the text, under a kind of necessity to recede from the literal sense of it, because we cannot altogether reconcile that to the analogy of faith. Nor will it seem strange to any who consider the mystical or allegorical style in which the book of Revelation is written, that this text should be understood metaphorically. Besides, to understand it so is not unaccordant with what we find in many other scriptures. These speak of the church's deliverance from its troubles, under the metaphor of 'a resurrection;' and of the destruction of its enemies, under the metaphor of 'death.' Thus the Babylonish captivity, and Israel's deliverance from it, are described, the former by a metaphor taken from a 'valley full of dry bones,' the latter by another taken from their being 'raised out of their graves, living and standing on their feet an exceeding great army.'<sup>i</sup> We read also of God's extending mercy to those who were before bondmen, and not forsaking them in their bondage, giving them an opportunity to set up the temple and worship of God.<sup>k</sup> This is called, 'giving them a reviving.' The prophet Jeremiah, also, speaking concerning the captivity, says, 'He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old;' and the prophet Isaiah speaks concerning their return from captivity, as a resurrection from the dead, 'Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust.'<sup>m</sup> Many other scriptures might be cited out of the writings of the prophets, to justify this metaphorical sense of the words 'death' and 'resurrection,' and also some out of the New Testament. Of the latter I need refer to only one, which has a particular reference to the subject under consideration; it is that in which the apostle says, that 'the receiving of them,' that is, the receiving of the church of the Jews when converted, 'shall be life from the dead.'<sup>n</sup> We conclude, therefore, that scripture gives countenance to the revival or prosperity of the church being called 'a resurrection.' On the other hand, we might refer to some scriptures which speak of the ruin of the church's enemies, under the metaphor of a state of death. Thus, 'They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.'<sup>o</sup> Again,<sup>p</sup> the prophet, in a very beautiful manner, describes the utter destruction of the Chaldeans, the church's enemies, by whom they had been carried captive; and he carries on the metaphor, taken from persons departed out of this world, saying, in particular, concerning the king of Babylon, 'Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.'<sup>q</sup> This signifies the political death of that empire, and the utter inability which followed of their giving disturbance to the church of God, as they had formerly done. These, and many other scriptures of a similar nature, may in some measure justify the sense we have given of the scripture before-mentioned, relating to the death and resurrection of Christ's cause for which his martyrs suffered, and the death of the antichristian cause which followed.

We have thus considered the opinion concerning Christ's reign on earth, and what may be probably supposed to be the sense of those scriptures which are brought in its defence. We have not entered into the particular consideration of what is said concerning the time, or the number of years, which this glorious dispensation shall continue. We read, indeed, of Christ's 'reigning a thousand years.' But by this we are not to understand the eternal exercise of his government; for, not only is it said to be 'on earth,' but the period is considered as one which shall have an end. That excellent Father whom I formerly mentioned did not duly consider this, when he reckoned the eternal exercise of Christ's government a probable sense of the thousand years. He produces, indeed, that scripture to justify his sense of the words in which it is said, 'God hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations,'<sup>r</sup> by which we are to understand that God will establish his covenant with his people, and make good its promises throughout all the ages of eternity. But though this sufficiently proves

i Ezek. xxxvii. 1—12.

n Rom. xi. 15.

r Psal. cv. 8.

k Ezra ix. 9.

o Isa. xxvi. 14.

l Lam. iii. 6.

p Chap. xiv.

m Isa. xxvi. 19.

q Ver. 9, 10, 11.

that a thousand years may be taken for eternity, agreeably to the sense of scripture ; it is plain from the context, that it is not to be so understood in Rev. xx. As to the other sense he gives of the thousand years,<sup>s</sup> namely, that they may be understood as containing a great but indeterminate number of years, in the latter part of the last thousand which the world shall continue, so that, by a figurative way of speaking, a part of a thousand years may be called a thousand years ;<sup>t</sup> I will not pretend to argue against it, or to say that those divines are in the wrong who suppose that a thousand years is put for a great number of years, and that it does not belong to us to say how many. Whether we are to acquiesce in this, or in the literal sense of the words, I will not determine ; only we must conclude, as we have scripture-ground for it, that the thousand years shall end a little before Christ's coming to judgment ; during which short interval, it is said, ' Satan will be loosed a little season,' and make some fresh efforts against the church, till he, and those that are spirited and excited by him to give disturbance to it, perish in the attempt, and are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. This is all that I shall say concerning the time appointed for this glorious reign, our principal design being to speak concerning the advantages which the church shall enjoy under it.

We have endeavoured to avoid two extremes. One of these is run into by those who do not put a just difference between the millennial reign and the heavenly state. The other extreme we have not yet mentioned. It is one which several modern writers have gone into, who suppose that the thousand years' reign is long since past ; that the binding of Satan consisted only in some degrees of restraint laid on him ; that the reign itself included only some advantages, comparatively small, which the church enjoyed at the time ; that the thousand years began in Constantine's time, when the empire became Christian, about the year of our Lord 300 ; and that they ended about the year 1300, when the church met with some new difficulties from the eastern parts of the world, which they suppose to be intended by Gog and Magog.<sup>u</sup> But we cannot see sufficient reason to adhere to this opinion ; because the state of the church, when Satan is said to be bound a thousand years, is represented as attended with a greater degree of spiritual glory, holiness, purity of doctrine, and many other blessings attending the preaching of the gospel, than we are given to understand by any history it has yet enjoyed.

As to the general method in which we have insisted on this difficult subject, I hope we have not maintained any thing which is derogatory to the glory of Christ's kingdom, or which has a tendency to detract from the real advantage of the saints. Do they on the other side of the question, speak of his reigning ? So do we. They, indeed, consider Christ as reigning in his human nature, and conversing in it with his saints ; which opinion we cannot give into, for reasons already mentioned. But it is not inconsistent with the glory of Christ to assert, as we have done, that he shall reign spiritually ; for the consequence shall be, not the external pomp and grandeur of his subjects, but their being adorned with purity and universal holiness, and enjoying as much peace as they have reason to expect in any condition short of heaven. Moreover, we have not advanced any thing which has a tendency to detract from the spiritual blessings and advantages of Christ's kingdom, which the saints shall enjoy in this happy period of time. If, however, it be said that there are some advantages which the contrary scheme of doctrine supposes the saints shall enjoy on earth, beyond what we think we have ground to expect from scripture ; we need only remark that their not enjoying them here will be fully compensated with a greater degree of glory which they shall have when they reign with Christ in heaven.

<sup>s</sup> Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xx. cap. 7.

<sup>t</sup> This is very agreeable to the scripture mode of speaking. Nothing is more common than for the cardinal number to be put for the ordinal ; and so the meaning is, that this reign shall continue to the thousandth year, or till the last 1000 years of the world shall have an end, what part soever of this 1000 years it began in. Thus God tells Abraham, in Gen. xv. 13, that ' his seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs,' that is, Egypt, and shall ' serve them, and afflict them 400 years.' Yet it is certain that his seed were not above 215 years in Egypt, and that they were not slaves, or afflicted there 100 years. The meaning, therefore, is as if it had been said, ' They shall afflict them till 400 years are expired, from this time.'

<sup>u</sup> See Napier on the Revelation Prop. 33, 34., pages 61, 62.



*The Eternity of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom.*

We are now led to consider the eternity of Christ's mediatorial kingdom. Concerning this it is said, 'He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.'<sup>x</sup> As he is described, by the apostle, as 'a Priest for ever,'<sup>y</sup> and as 'ever living to make intercession for those that come unto God by him';<sup>z</sup> so he shall exercise his kingly office for ever, not according to the present method of its administration, but in a way adapted to that glorified state in which his subjects shall be in another world.

There is, indeed, a scripture which seems to assert the contrary, and which the Socinians give a very perverse sense of, as if it were inconsistent with his proper deity. They suppose, that, as he was constituted a divine Person, or had the honour of a God, or King, conferred on him when he ascended into heaven, as the reward of the faithful discharge of his ministry on earth; so this was designed to continue no longer than to the end of the world, when he is to be set on a level with other inhabitants of heaven, and 'be subject to the Father,' when 'God shall be all in all.' This they suppose to be the meaning of the apostle's words in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 28, 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; and, when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.' It must be acknowledged that this is one of those things, in Paul's epistles, which are hard to be understood; yet I humbly conceive that we may give a sense of it, very remote from that just mentioned, which is subversive of his Godhead, and of the eternity of his kingdom.—Let it be considered, then, that when the apostle speaks of the 'end coming, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father;' by 'the kingdom,' we may, without the least strain on the sense of the text, understand his material kingdom, or the subjects of his kingdom. This agrees very well with the sense of the word, both in scripture and in common modes of speaking; as when we call the inhabitants of a city, 'the city,' or the subjects of a kingdom, 'the kingdom.' Taking the words in this sense, we must suppose that the subjects of Christ's kingdom are his trust and charge, and that he is to deliver them up to the Father at last, as persons whom he has governed in such a way that the great ends of his exercising his kingly office have been fully answered, as to what concerns his government in this world. This is no improbable sense of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father. But it may be taken also in another sense,—for the form of Christ's kingdom, or the present mode of government, exercised towards those who are in an imperfect state. This shall 'be delivered up,' that is, he shall cease to govern his people in such a way as he now does. It does not follow, however, that he shall not continue to govern them in a way adapted to the heavenly state. And when it is said that 'he shall put down all rule, and all authority and power,' the meaning is, that all civil and ecclesiastical government, as it is now exercised in the world or the church, shall be put down as useless, or disagreeable to the heavenly state. But it does not follow, that he shall lay aside his own authority and power.—Again, when it is said that 'he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet,'<sup>a</sup> the words imply, not that he shall not reign afterwards, but that he shall not cease to reign till then. This is the sense of the parallel scripture in which it is said, 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'<sup>b</sup> These words do not denote that he shall, after his enemies are made his footstool, sit no longer at God's right hand, as advanced there to the highest honour. It is very evident, from several scriptures, as well as from our common mode of speaking, that the word 'until' does not always signify the cessation of what is said to be done before, but only the continuance of it till that time, as well as afterwards. Thus it is said, 'Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,

<sup>x</sup> Luke i. 33.<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 25.<sup>y</sup> Heb. v. 6.<sup>b</sup> Psal. cx. 1.<sup>z</sup> Heb. vii. 25.

until that he have mercy upon us ;' <sup>c</sup> by which we are to understand, not that, when God extends mercy, the eyes of his people cease to wait upon him, but that we will not leave off waiting upon him, until we have received the mercies we hope for, and that afterwards we will continue to wait for those mercies which we shall farther stand in need of. Job also says, 'Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me ; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' <sup>d</sup> This does not imply that he would retain his integrity no longer than he lived. If, then, the word 'until' be frequently used in this sense, there is no ground to suppose that, when it is said 'Christ shall reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet, the words denote that he shall not reign to eternity, or any longer than 'till all things be subdued unto him.' Indeed, they rather argue, that he shall reign for ever, than that he shall cease to reign ; for when all enemies are removed out of the way, and his right to govern is no longer contested by them, shall he then cease to exercise that sovereign dominion which he has over all things ?—The main difficulty, however, and the greatest stress of the argument brought against the eternity of Christ's kingdom, are found in what the apostle farther adds in the twenty-eighth verse of this chapter, that 'when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that God may be all in all.' Here it is said, indeed, that the Son shall be 'subject to the Father,' that is, as man ; but can any one suppose that the Son is not now subject to the Father ? And when it is added, 'God shall be all in all,' is it to be supposed that he is not now so ? If to suppose this would be far from being the true meaning of the words, then the sense which the Socinians give of them is not just. We are to understand them thus, that 'in the end,' when all the designs of Christ's administering his mediatorial government in this world are answered, and the present form or method of administration shall cease, it shall appear that the whole plan of that administration had the most direct tendency to promote the Father's glory, or to answer those most valuable ends for which the mediatorial kingdom was erected ; and that, by this means, it will more eminently appear than ever before, that his work is from God, and worthy of him. If the Son's kingdom had not been subjected or subversive to the Father's glory, the subjects of it would not be 'delivered up,' or presented to the Father as the Mediator's trust and charge committed to him ; and, if God had not been 'all in all,' or the administration of Christ's kingdom had not, in all its branches, been the effect of divine power, it would not have so glorious and successful an issue, as it will appear to have in the great day. This I take to be the plain sense of this scripture. Nor can it reasonably be denied to be so, if we consider that it is very agreeable to our common mode of speaking, to say that a thing is, when it appears to be what it is. Suppose, for example, that a king has gained a victory over his enemies, or quelled some civil broils or tumults in his kingdom, he may say, 'Now I am king,' that is, 'I appear to be so,' or 'my establishment in the kingdom seems less precarious.' We have an instance of the same mode of speaking in scripture, when David says, on occasion of bringing the affairs of his kingdom to a settled state, after Absalom's rebellion, 'Do not I know that I am this day king over Israel ?' <sup>e</sup> that is, 'I appear to be so, since that which tended to unhinge or give disturbance to my government, is removed out of the way.' Moreover, that things are said to be, when they appear to be, is agreeable to the mode of speaking used by the Israelites, when on their receiving in answer to Elijah's prayer the fullest conviction that the Lord was God, by an extraordinary display of his glory in working a miracle to confute their idolatry, they fell on their faces, and said, 'The Lord he is God,' that is, 'He now appears to be so, by those extraordinary effects of his power which we have beheld.' If, then, this is no uncommon mode of speaking, why may we not apply it to the text which we are now endeavouring to explain ? We may hence conclude, that the sense just given of the Son's being subject to the Father, and God's being all in all, contains nothing absurd, or contrary to the scripture way of speaking ; and that therefore, the eternity of Christ's kingdom is not overthrown by the text in question. As Christ's kingly government is now exercised in a way agreeable to the

<sup>c</sup> Psal. cxxiii. 2.<sup>d</sup> Job xxvii. 5, 6.<sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. xix. 22.



present condition of his church; so it shall be exercised in a glorious manner, suited to the heavenly state, when all his saints and subjects shall be brought thither.

We have thus considered Christ, as executing his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and we now proceed to speak concerning the twofold state in which they have been, are, or shall be, executed by him. The former of these states is that of his humiliation.

[NOTE 3 S. *The First Resurrection*.—The notion that the dead in Christ shall be raised before the wicked has no countenance from 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Paul is speaking of the order or precedence of a resurrection, not in reference to another or second resurrection, but in reference to the ascent of the redeemed to meet the Lord. As in his extended view of the resurrection, in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, so here he does not so much as glance at the peculiar phases of the event as it respects the wicked, his sole object being to explain the glory and blessedness of its nature and results in the experience of the redeemed. He speaks here, indeed, of two classes of persons; but these are deceased believers, and believers who shall be alive, or shall not have seen death, at Christ's coming. Now, what he states is, that, in the first place, the former of these classes shall be raised from the dead; and that, in the next place, they and surviving believers 'shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.'

The notion of a twofold resurrection, or of that of the righteous preceding that of the wicked, appears to be not only uncountenanced by scripture, but inconsistent with several explicit texts. 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,' Dan. xii. 2. 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works,' Rev. xx. 12, 13. 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left,' Matt. xxv. 31—33. Mankind shall thus rise, and even appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, in a promiscuous multitude; and only as a result of the final judgment shall they be separated into two great classes, the saved and the condemned, the righteous at Christ's right hand and the wicked at his left. Not a first and a second resurrection, then, but the process of an adjudication conducted among all, both small and great, shall declare or elicit one class to be 'accursed,' and another class to be 'blessed.'—Ed.]

## CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN HIS BIRTH, AND IN HIS LIFE ON EARTH.

QUESTION XLVI. *What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?*

ANSWER. The estate of Christ's humiliation was, that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and, after his death, until his resurrection.

QUESTION XLVII. *How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?*

ANSWER. Christ humbled himself in his conception, in that being, from all eternity, the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased, in the fulness of time, to become the Son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

QUESTION XLVIII. *How did Christ humble himself in his life?*

ANSWER. Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled, and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh; whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

### *In what sense Christ humbled himself.*

In considering Christ's low and humble state while he was in this world, we may observe that it is styled, his 'emptying himself of his glory,' when 'he took on him the form of a servant.' Thus the apostle expresses it, in Phil. ii. 7; for so the words<sup>f</sup> which we render, 'he made himself of no reputation,' are to be understood. [See Note 3 T, page 593.] Now, as his incarnation is so expressed, we must, be-

fore we proceed farther on this subject, inquire how his emptying himself of his glory was consistent with his Godhead; whether he might be said, in taking our nature, to empty or humble himself; and whether his incarnation may, properly speaking, be called a part of his humiliation?

There is a sense in which he may be said to humble himself in his divine nature; as when we read of 'God's humbling himself, to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.'<sup>5</sup> This is so far from being a dishonour to him, that it is expressive of his glory; for it argues that there is an infinite distance between him and the creature. In this sense, the second Person in the Godhead might be said to humble himself in assuming the human nature, and thereby, as it were, casting a veil over his glory. This is such a sense of Christ's humiliation as denotes infinite condescension, but no diminution or loss of divine glory. It cannot, however, be styled, his emptying himself of glory, or humbling himself in that sense in which the apostle uses the phrase. That Christ's incarnation was the highest instance of condescension cannot be denied; and, if nothing more be intended than this, when persons speak of Christ's humbling himself in his incarnation, or taking our nature into union with his divine, we are far from denying it. But we are now speaking, not of Christ's humbling himself in a relative sense as God, but of his being in a state of humiliation, as God-man, Mediator. In this sense, the act of incarnation, or taking the human nature into union with his divine Person, cannot, properly speaking, be styled a branch of his mediatorial humiliation; for that which tends to constitute the Person of the Mediator, cannot be said to belong to him as Mediator. For understanding this matter, let the following points be observed.

1. The Person of Christ is to be considered in two different respects, namely, as God, and as Mediator. In the former sense, he was, from eternity, a divine Person, and would have been so if he had not been Mediator. But when we speak of his Person, as Mediator, we always consider him as God-man.<sup>h</sup>

2. Every mediatorial act,<sup>i</sup> according to the most proper and literal sense of it, supposes the constitution of his Person as God-man Mediator; and consequently, it supposes him to be incarnate. This is evident from the fact that what he did on earth was performed by him in obedience to the Father, and as having received a commission from him, which could not be performed any otherwise than in his human nature.

3. Christ could not be said to assume the human nature into union with his divine Person, as God-man, for that implies a contradiction in terms; nor could it be said that, before his doing so, he performed any act of obedience to the law, for that supposes the human nature to be assumed, and therefore is consequent on his incarnation.

4. We may farther distinguish between the act of incarnation, or taking the human nature into union with his divine Person; and the state in which he was afterwards. The former was an instance of divine condescension; the latter, in the most proper sense, was a branch of his mediatorial humiliation. This leads us to consider the various instances in which Christ is said, in some following Answers, to have humbled himself, namely, in his birth, life, death, and after his death.

### *Christ's Humiliation in his Birth.*

Christ humbled himself in his birth, in various respects.

1. He did so by submitting to be in a state of infancy, in common with all who

g Psal. cxiii. 6.

h When we consider Christ as Mediator, from all eternity, we include in this idea, his human nature, as what was to be assumed in time. There is a prolepsis in such a mode of speaking; as, when he is said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' In the same sense, he might be said to be man, from the foundation of the world; and so we understand it, when we speak of him as God-man Mediator, from all eternity.

i By Christ's mediatorial acts, we mean every thing which he did and suffered, in the whole course of his obedience, unto death. This is not to be considered in a proleptic sense, as what he did as Mediator, before his incarnation, may be said to be, as he might then, in some respects, be said to execute his prophetic or kingly offices, as Mediator, or as one who designed, in the fulness of time, to take our nature into union with his divine Person.



come into the world. This is the most inactive state of life; one in which we are under a natural incapacity of enjoying God or conversing with him, or of being of any other use than objectively to men. For the new-born infant is destitute, at least, of the regular exercise of thought; and is also exposed to various evils which attend its infantile state; sensible of much pain and uneasiness, which renders it the object of compassion; and knows not what is the secret cause of this, or how to seek redress. This stage of life our Saviour passed through; and in doing so, he discovered a great degree of humiliation. We have no reason to think, with the Papists,<sup>k</sup> that, during his infancy, he had the perfect exercise of his reasoning powers, as if he had been in a state of manhood; nor do we suppose that the contrary would have been a dishonour to him. For, if it were in no respect unbecoming the divine nature to continue its union with his body, when the body was separate from its soul, and therefore in a state of the greatest inactivity, it could be no dishonour for it to be united to his human nature, though we suppose it to have been during his infancy, in that state in which other infants are, as having the powers and faculties of the soul not deduced into act, as they afterwards are. We hence can reckon the popish opinion no other than a groundless and unnecessary conjecture; and cannot but admire this instance of his humiliation, while he was an infant. Indeed, as he came to redeem infants as well as others, it was becoming the wisdom and goodness of God that he should be like them, in most other respects, except in their being born guilty of Adam's sin. If his passing through the other ages of life was designed for our advantage, as he was in doing so like unto us, and, as the apostle says, able to sympathize with us in the various miseries which attend them; so his passing through a state of infancy affords a similar argument for that peculiar compassion which he has for infants, under those evils to which they are liable.

What we have here asserted against those who think it a dishonour to him, to suppose that, during his infancy, he was liable to any imperfection as to knowledge, is not to be reckoned a groundless conjecture, without sufficient reason to support it. For it is expressly said in scripture, that he 'increased in wisdom,'<sup>l</sup> as well as 'stature.' We suppose, therefore, that Christ's humiliation began in those natural infirmities to which he was liable, and which are inseparable from a state of infancy.

2. Another branch of Christ's humiliation, respecting his birth, was that he should be born of a woman of very low degree in the world, rather than of one whose circumstances and character were superior to those of all others, and called for a corresponding degree of respect from them. The blessed virgin was, indeed, in a spiritual sense, honoured and favoured above all women, as the salutation given her by the angel imports: 'Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.'<sup>m</sup> Yet it is plain she was far from being honourable in the opinion of the world. She was of the seed of David, it is true, which was a princely line. But the sceptre was now departed from it. Hence, when our Saviour is said to have had 'the throne of his father David'<sup>n</sup> given him by God, it is certain he had it not from his parents in a political sense. It is called, indeed, 'the throne of David,' in reference to the promise made to David,<sup>o</sup> that one should descend from him whom God would 'set on his throne, whose kingdom he would establish for ever.' What relates to the establishment of David's kingdom, and the eternity of it, certainly looks farther than the reign of Solomon, or the succession of kings who were of that line; so that David's kingdom continuing for ever, denotes the perpetuity of it in Christ's being set, in a spiritual sense, on his throne. This seems to be the meaning of the angel's words, 'He shall sit on the throne of his father David.' He had not, indeed, a right to David's crown by natural descent from him, as that seems contrary to what was foretold of him. For though it is said that 'a rod shall come of the stem of Jesse, and a branch

<sup>k</sup> See Bellarm. Tom. i. lib. iv. cap. i. who pretends that it is universally held by them, when he says, 'Catholicorum communis sententia fuit, Christi animam ab ipsa sua creatione repletam scientia et gratia; ita ut nihil postea didicerit quod antea nesciret, nec ullam actionem fecerit aut facere potuerit quæ emendatione egerit. Ita docent cum magistro omnes Theologi et etiam omnes Patres.' This he endeavours to maintain by arguments, which I shall not enter into a particular account of.

<sup>l</sup> Luke ii. 52.

<sup>m</sup> Luke i. 28.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. i. 32.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 12—16.

grow out of his roots,<sup>p</sup> which plainly refers to our Saviour, as being of the seed of David; yet it is as plainly intimated that he was not to inherit the crown of David, in a political sense, by right of natural descent from him, inasmuch as it is said, 'He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.'<sup>q</sup>

We may add, that his mother's condition in the world appears to have been very low, inasmuch as she was treated with an uncommon degree of neglect. It is particularly remarked,<sup>r</sup> with a view to set forth our Saviour's humiliation in his birth, that 'she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.' There was no room, because his mother was poor, and therefore was treated with neglect. Better accommodations were reserved for others, who, at that time, in which there was great resort to Bethlehem, were better able to satisfy the mercenary demands of those at whose house they lodged.

As for Joseph, his reputed father, he was not one of the great men of this world, but lived by his industry, his occupation being that of a carpenter.<sup>s</sup> This was sometimes objected against our Saviour by his enemies, who did not consider that the mean condition of his parents was a part of that state of humiliation which he was to pass through, in discharging the work for which he came into the world. It plainly discovered that he cast the utmost contempt on all the external pomp and grandeur of the world, and thought no honours worthy of his receiving, but such as were of a spiritual nature.

3. There is another circumstance of humiliation, found in the places of our Saviour's birth and residence. He was born in Bethlehem, a city which, though once esteemed honourable when David dwelt there, yet, at this time, was reckoned by the Jews as not one of the principal cities of Judah. The prophet Micah styles it, 'little among the thousands of Judah.'<sup>t</sup> But as for Nazareth, the place of his abode, it was despised, even to a proverb; so much so that the Jews reckoned that nothing good or great could come out of it. Nathanael expresses their common opinion, when he says, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?'<sup>u</sup> His being of this place was afterwards turned against him, as an argument that he was no prophet. The Jews said, concerning not this place alone indeed, but concerning the whole country in which it was, namely, Galilee, 'Out of it ariseth no prophet.'<sup>x</sup> Moreover, it is expressly intimated as a design of providence, that his being of Nazareth should be a part of his humiliation; for it is said, 'He dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.'<sup>y</sup> By this we are not to understand that any of the prophets foretold in express words that he should be called a Nazarene, as having particular reference to the place where he lived. But the meaning is, that as the prophets with one consent spake of him as being in a most low and humble state, so this was a particular instance of his being so; and in that respect, what was spoken by them concerning his state of humiliation, in various instances was fulfilled in this.<sup>z</sup>

### *Christ's Humiliation throughout his Life.*

Christ's state of humiliation appeared throughout his whole life, in several instances.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. xi. 1.

<sup>t</sup> Micah v. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. liii. 2.

<sup>u</sup> John i. 46.

<sup>r</sup> Luke ii. 7.

<sup>x</sup> Chap. vii. 52.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xiii. 55.

<sup>y</sup> Matt. ii. 23.

<sup>z</sup> This seems to be a better sense of the text than what is given by some, who suppose that it was an accomplishment of what was foretold, by the prophets, concerning his being נצר Netzer, 'the Branch.' (Isa. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. Zech. vi. 12.) For that refers to his being of the seed of David, and not to the place of his abode; so that he could not be called the Branch, because he dwelt in Nazareth. Others suppose that he is so called from נזיר Nazir, which signifies, in its application, one that dwelt in Nazareth, and, in its derivation, one that is separated, either to God, as the Nazarites were of old, or from men, by some peculiar marks of infamy or reproach cast upon him, as Joseph is said to have been (Gen. xlix. 26.) 'separate from his brethren.' These do, in effect, assert the same thing which we have observed, namely, that it is the concurrent sense of all the prophets, that he should be in a low and humble state, of which his residing in Nazareth was a particular instance.



1. It appeared in his subjecting himself to the law. Accordingly, he was under an obligation to yield obedience to God in every thing which was required of him, during the whole course of his life. This, indeed, was the necessary result of his incarnation; so that he no sooner became man, than he was under a law which no creature is or can be exempted from. Yet his being under it was founded on his own consent, inasmuch as he consented to be incarnate, which was certainly an instance of infinite condescension; and his being, in pursuance of his consent, actually made under the law, was a branch of his mediatorial humiliation.

He was made under the law, that is, he was obliged to obey its precepts. Not only had this respect to the moral law, which, as to some of its precepts, the best of creatures are under a natural obligation to yield obedience to; but there were also several positive laws to which, in common with those he came to redeem, he submitted to yield obedience. This obligation he perfectly fulfilled, as is observed in what he says to John the Baptist, 'Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'<sup>a</sup> This is as if he had, 'It becometh me, in common with all mankind, to yield perfect obedience to the law.' Elsewhere, too, he speaks of himself as having come into the world 'to fulfil the law.'<sup>b</sup> We may observe, moreover, that it was not one single act, but a course of obedience, which he performed, during his whole life; or, as it is expressed in this Answer, 'he perfectly fulfilled the law.' This accords with that sinless perfection which is ascribed to him in scripture.

Again, he was made under the law, that is, he was subject to the curse of it which was due to us for sin. This is called by divines the maledictory part of the law. Now, it is said, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'<sup>c</sup> As he obeyed what the law enjoined, so he suffered what it threatened as a punishment due to us for sin.

2. Our Saviour conflicted with the indignities of the world. When he was an infant, 'Herod sought his life:' and, had not his 'parents been warned by God' to flee into another country, he would have been slain, as well as the children that were barbarously murdered in Bethlehem.<sup>d</sup> But he was most persecuted, and met with the greatest indignities, after he appeared publicly in the world. Before that time, till he was about thirty years of age, it might be reckoned a part of his humiliation, that he was not much known in the world, and that he was, at least, during a considerable part of the time, dependent on and subject to his parents. It is true, he did not meet with much opposition from the Jews, so long as they were in expectation that he would appear as an earthly monarch, and deliver them from the Roman yoke. But when their expectation of this was frustrated, and they saw nothing in him but what was suitable to his state of humiliation, they were offended; and from that time the greatest injuries and indignities were offered to him. This will appear if we consider some particulars in their treatment of him.

They did not own his glory as the Son of God; nor did they see and adore his deity that was united to the human nature, when, being made flesh, he dwelt among us. Accordingly, it is observed, that though 'the world was made by him, the world knew him not;'<sup>e</sup> or, as the apostle says concerning him,—for so the words may be rendered,—'Whom none of the princes of this world knew.'<sup>f</sup> They knew him not nor owned him to be the Lord of glory; and as they knew him not, so they desired not to know him. Hence, the prophet says, 'We hid as it were our faces from him.'<sup>g</sup>—Again, they questioned his mission, and denied him to be the Christ, though this truth had been confirmed by so many incontestable miracles. This is that unbelief which the Jews are so often charged with. Thus when they come to him, and tell him, 'How long dost thou make us to doubt? tell us plainly, whether thou be the Christ or no?' he replies, 'I told you and ye believed not;' and he appeals to 'the works which he did in his Father's name,'<sup>h</sup> which, one would think, were a sufficient evidence of his claims. Still they were obstinate and hardened in unbelief.—Not only so, but they reproached him, as though he wrought miracles by the power of the devil. This was the most malicious and groundless slander that could be invented; as though Satan's kingdom had been 'divided against it-

<sup>a</sup> Matt. iii. 15.  
<sup>e</sup> John i. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. v. 17.  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Gal. iii. 13.  
<sup>g</sup> Isa. liii. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. ii. 13.  
<sup>h</sup> John x. 24—26.

self,' or as though he would empower a person to work miracles, as a means to promote the interest of God, and thereby to weaken his own, as our Saviour justly replies to that charge.<sup>i</sup> Indeed, they knew, in their own consciences, that this was a false accusation; and in making it, they sinned against the greatest light, and fullest conviction. This occasioned him to denounce that terrible and awful threatening against them, that this 'sin should never be forgiven them, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.'—Further, they reproached him as to his moral character, for no other reason but because he conversed in a free and friendly manner with his people, and went about doing them good. If he, at any time, accepted of the least common offices of kindness, or conversed with sinful men with a design to promote their spiritual advantage, they reviled him for it. Accordingly, he says, 'The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.'<sup>k</sup>—It was also a matter of common discourse amongst them, that he was a deceiver of the people; though the evidence of truth shone like a sunbeam in every thing which he said and did. Thus it is said, 'There was much murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.'<sup>l</sup>—Sometimes, too, they were uneasy at his presence, and desirous to be rid of him and his ministry. Thus the Gergesenes, because they had suffered a little damage in the loss of their swine, unanimously 'besought him to depart out of their coasts.'<sup>m</sup> They knew not their own privilege, but were weary of him who was a public and universal blessing to the world.—Moreover, many refused to give him entertainment in their houses, or to treat him with that civility which a common traveller expects. This occasioned him to complain, that 'the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'<sup>n</sup>—Finally, they at times, even before his last sufferings and crucifixion, attempted to take away his life; and, in doing so, they expressed the greatest degree of ingratitude and hatred of him. Their attempts, indeed, were to no purpose, because his hour was not yet come. Thus, when he had asserted his divine glory, they not only charged him with blasphemy, but 'took up stones to stone him.'<sup>o</sup> Even his fellow-citizens, among whom he had been brought up, and to whom he usually read and expounded the scripture 'on the Sabbath days,' not only 'thrust him out of the city,' but 'led him to the brow of an hill,' designing to put him to death by casting him down from it; but 'he passed through the midst of them,' and, for the present, escaped their bloody design. This was a more aggravated crime, as it was committed by those who were under peculiar obligations to him.<sup>p</sup> He thus 'endured,' not only, as the apostle says, 'the contradiction of sinners against himself,'<sup>q</sup> but the most ungrateful and injurious treatment from those to whom he had been so great a friend, and whose ingratitude enhanced his sufferings. We see then, that, during his whole life, he might be said to have been as the prophet styles him, 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'<sup>r</sup>

3. Christ humbled himself, in being subject to those sinless infirmities which were either common to the human nature, or particularly accompanying that low condition in which he was. Some of those afflictions which he endured took their rise from the sin or misery of others. Thus he is said to have been 'afflicted in all the affliction of his people';<sup>s</sup> which was an instance of that great sympathy and compassion which he bare towards them. Sometimes he was grieved for the degeneracy and apostacy of the Jewish nation, and for the contempt they cast on the gospel, whereby his ministry, though discharged with the greatest faithfulness, was, through the unbelief of those among whom he exercised it, without its desired success. Accordingly, he is represented by the prophet as complaining, 'I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.'<sup>t</sup> And, when he had almost finished his ministry among them, and looked upon Jerusalem as a self-ruined people, 'he beheld the city and wept over it.'<sup>u</sup> Besides, he was sometimes grieved for the remains of corruption, and the breakings forth of it in those

i Matt. xii. 24—26.

n Matt. viii. 20.

q Heb. xii. 3.

u Luke xix. 41.

k Chap. xi. 19.

o John viii. 59.

r Isa. liiii. 3.

l John vii. 12.

p Luke iv. 16. compared with 29, 30.

s Isa. lxixi. 9.

m Matt. viii. 34.

t Chap. xlix. 4.



whom he loved in a distinguishing manner. Thus he was sometimes afflicted in his own spirit, by reason of the hardness of the heart of his disciples, and the various instances of their unbelief. These afflictions, more especially, might be called relative, as the occasion of them was seated in others. But there were many afflictions which he endured which were more especially personal; such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, weariness in travelling to and fro in the discharge of his public ministry, and that poverty and want of the common necessities of life which he submitted to whose divine bounty supplies the wants of all creatures. These and many other sufferings he endured in life, were agreeable to that state of humiliation in which he was during its whole course.

*Christ's Humiliation in Temptations.*

Our Saviour conflicted with the temptations of Satan. It is said, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;'<sup>x</sup> and, 'He suffered being tempted.'<sup>y</sup> We are not to understand, by his being, in all points, tempted like as we are, that he had any temptations arising in his own soul, as we have from the corruption of our nature; for this would have been inconsistent with his perfect holiness. What the apostle says concerning us, that 'every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,'<sup>z</sup> is by no means applicable to him. Yet that he was tempted by Satan is very evident from scripture. Some think that Satan was let loose upon him, and suffered to express his utmost malice against him, and to practise all those usual methods whereby he endeavours to ensnare mankind, in two remarkable seasons of his life, namely, in his entrance on his public ministry, and immediately before his last sufferings. The former none deny; the latter some think we have ground to conclude from his own words, in which he says, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.'<sup>a</sup> Here it seems that, by 'the prince of this world,' he means the devil; for he is so called elsewhere,<sup>b</sup> as well as 'the god of this world,'<sup>c</sup> and 'the prince of the power of the air.'<sup>d</sup> If this be the sense of our Saviour's words, 'The prince of this world cometh,' it is as if he had said, 'I expect that, together with my other sufferings, I shall be exposed to the last and most violent efforts which Satan will make. As he assaulted me when I entered on my public ministry, so he will do it now when I am about to close my work on earth. Then he endeavoured to ensnare me with his wiles; now he will endeavour to make me uneasy with his fiery darts.' This was, as it were, 'the hour' of the powers of darkness; and we may suppose that, if they were suffered, they would attempt to discourage our Saviour, by representing to him the formidableness of the death of the cross, the insupportableness of the wrath of God due to sin, and how much it was his interest to take some method to save himself from those evils which were impending. Accordingly, we may suppose that our Saviour apprehends the tempter as coming. But we may observe he says, 'He hath nothing in me,' that is, 'No corrupt nature which shall make me receptive of any impressions arising from his temptations. His fiery darts, though pointed and directed against me, shall be as darts shot against a rock, into which they cannot enter, but are immediately repelled.' Some think, however, that, by 'the prince of this world,' our Saviour does not mean the devil, any otherwise than as he instigated his persecutors to accuse, condemn, and crucify him; and that this view of the phrase is most agreeable to the words immediately preceding, 'Hereafter I will not talk much with you,' which are as if he had said, 'I have not much time to converse with you; for he who will betray me, and those who are sent to apprehend me, are ready to come. I must, in a very little time, be accused and tried, and, in consequence, condemned, though they will find nothing in me worthy of death.' As it is questioned whether this sense of the text be not as probable as that which we have mentioned, so that the case before us cannot be reckoned an instance of Christ's temptation more immediately from Satan, we shall pass it over, and proceed to consider that conflict which, without doubt, he underwent with the devil, in his entrance on his public ministry.

<sup>x</sup> Heb. iv. 15.  
<sup>b</sup> Chap. xii. 31.

<sup>y</sup> Chap. ii. 18.  
<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 4.

<sup>z</sup> James i. 14.  
<sup>d</sup> Eph. ii. 2.

<sup>a</sup> John xiv. 30.

This we read of in Matt. iv. 1—11. and Luke iv. 1—13. As there is a small difference between these two Evangelists, in the account they give of this matter, whence the enemies of divine revelation take occasion to reproach it as if it were inconsistent with itself, we shall briefly consider and vindicate it from this calumny. We may observe that Matthew says, 'When he had fasted forty days, the tempter came to him;' whereas Luke says, 'He was forty days tempted of the devil;' and Mark speaks to the same purpose.<sup>e</sup> Matthew seems to speak of his temptations as at the end of the forty days. The other two Evangelists intimate that he was tempted, more or less, during all the forty days. There is no contradiction between these two accounts. Luke only adds a circumstance which Matthew omits, namely, that Satan assaulted him with various temptations during all the time he was in the wilderness; those which are recorded by both the Evangelists having been towards the end of the forty days. Again, Matthew, speaking concerning the first of these temptations, introduces the devil as saying to our Saviour, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' Luke, on the other hand, speaks but of one stone: 'Command that this stone be made bread.' This seeming contradiction may easily be reconciled, by considering that by these 'stones' in Matthew, may be meant 'one of these stones.' This is a very common Hebraism. It is said, for example, that 'Jonah was gone down to the sides of the ship,'<sup>f</sup> that is, one of the sides; and elsewhere it is said that, when Christ was upon the cross, 'the thieves' who were crucified with him reviled him,<sup>g</sup> which Luke explains, when he says, 'One of the malefactors railed on him.'<sup>h</sup> So, in this temptation, Satan pointing at some large stone, tempted Christ to turn it into bread; and Matthew intends no more, when he says, 'Command that these stones be made bread,' than 'Command that *one* of them be made bread.' Again, we observe a difference in the account given by Matthew, from that given by Luke, respecting the order of the temptations. Matthew speaks of Satan's tempting him 'to fall down and worship him,' as the third and last temptation, which, it is more than probable, it was; but Luke, inverting the order, lays down this temptation in the second place. There is, however, no contradiction between the two; for the credit of an historian is not weakened, provided he relate matters of fact, though he does not, in every circumstance, observe the order in which things were done, especially when nothing material depends upon his doing so. On the whole, therefore, the difference between the account of the two Evangelists is so inconsiderable, that it is needless to say anything farther on the subject. We shall proceed, then, to consider Christ's temptation, as we find it there recorded.

We may observe the time in which he was exposed to the temptation. This was immediately after his baptism, when he entered on his public ministry. He had just received a glorious testimony, by a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;'<sup>i</sup> and it is added, 'Then was he led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil;' or, as Mark farther explains it, 'Immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.'<sup>k</sup> From this we may take occasion to infer, that God's children have reason to expect, in conformity to Christ their Head, that, after extraordinary manifestations of divine love, they may sometimes meet with great temptations; so that, as grace is excited by the one, it may be exercised, tried, and the truth of it more plainly evinced by the other. Indeed, there is in us a particular reason for it, which was not applicable to our Saviour; namely, that, after great honours conferred upon us, when God is pleased to manifest himself to us, we may be kept, as the apostle says concerning himself on a similar occasion, from being 'exalted above measure.'<sup>l</sup> We may observe, also, how Satan shows his malice and envy against God's people; so that, when they are raised nearest to heaven, he will use his utmost endeavours to bring them down to hell. Hereby he shows his opposition to God, by attempting to rob him of that glory which he designs to bring to himself by these extraordinary manifestations; as well as to rob his people of the blessed fruits and effects of these manifestations, by doing which he thinks to counteract what God is doing for them. Again, as

e Mark i. 13.  
i Matt. iii. 17.

f Jonah i. 5.  
k Mark i. 12.

g Matt. xxvii. 44.  
l 2 Cor. xii. 7.

h Luke xxiii. 39.



our Saviour was tempted just before his entrance on his public ministry, we learn that, when God designs that his people shall engage in any great, useful, and difficult work, they are likely to meet with great temptations. These God suffers, that he may put them upon being on their watch, and fortify them against many other temptations which they may expect to meet with in the performance of their work. Many instances of this we have in scripture. When Moses, in particular, was called to go into the land of Egypt,<sup>m</sup> and when the prophet Jeremiah was sent to 'a people whose faces he was afraid of,'<sup>n</sup> Satan suggested several unwarrantable excuses, to discourage them from undertaking the work to which they were called.

The next thing to be observed, is the place in which Christ was exposed to these conflicts with the tempter, namely, the wilderness. It is not our business to inquire what wilderness it was, whether one of the smaller wildernesses in the land of Judea, or the great wilderness on the other side of Jordan, since scripture is silent on the subject. The latter, indeed, seems more probable; as there are higher mountains in it than in the other, and we read that that wilderness in which Christ was tempted, had in it an exceeding high mountain whence the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. There was in that wilderness mount Nebo, from the top of which Moses took a view of the whole land of Canaan. But, passing by the consideration of the particular wilderness, in which Christ was tempted, we shall observe only that the place which providence designed for this conflict was a wilderness. One reason for selecting such a place was that Christ might fast during the time of his being there, that being a place destitute of necessary food. This was ordered by providence, not only as a particular instance of his humiliation, but that Satan might take occasion to suit one of his temptations to his condition, as being an hungered. Another reason was, that being separate from all his friends and acquaintance, he might be neither helped nor hindered by them; so that Satan might have the greatest advantage he could desire against him, as solitude is a state most adapted to temptations; and consequently that Christ's affliction, and the victory he should obtain, should be more remarkable. As no one was with him to offer him any assistance; so none could take occasion to claim a part in his triumph over the adversary. As to what is said, in the text, concerning his being 'led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted,' we humbly conceive that it is the Holy Spirit who is there intended, as the words seem to import. It would not be so proper to say, He was led by the impure spirit, the devil, to be tempted of the devil. Besides, Luke says, that, 'being full of the Holy Ghost, he was led by the Spirit,' that is, the Holy Ghost, with whom he was filled, 'into the wilderness.'<sup>o</sup> Moreover, it does not seem agreeable to the holiness of Christ, to suppose that he went into the wilderness at the motion and instigation of the devil; for that would have been an unjustifiable action. We may lawfully go in the way of temptation when providence leads us there; but it is not lawful for us to go within the verge of Satan's temptations by his own instigation. This seems farther probable from its being said, that, 'after the devil was departed from him, he returned in,' or by, 'the power of the Spirit into Galilee.'<sup>p</sup> If he returned by the power of the Holy Spirit out of the wilderness, have we not equal ground to conclude that he was led by him into it at first? It may be said, indeed, that he did not go into the wilderness by the instigation of the devil, but was carried thither with violence by him. But though this would clear our Saviour from the guilt of going by the devil's persuasion in the way of temptation; yet we can hardly allow that God would suffer the devil to have so much power over Christ's body, as to carry him whither he pleased by a violent motion. It may be replied, that the devil might as well be said to carry him into the wilderness, as to take him up into the holy city, and set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, by a violent motion. In this sense some understand that passage in the second temptation in which it is said that the devil did so.<sup>q</sup> What answer may be given to this, will appear from what may farther be said, when we speak of this temptation in particular.

We shall now consider the three temptations, mentioned in this scripture, to

<sup>m</sup> Exod. iv. 1, 10, 13.

<sup>n</sup> Jer. i. 6, 8.

<sup>o</sup> Luke iv. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 14.

<sup>q</sup> Ver. 5.

which he was exposed. Looking at them in a general way, we may observe that the two first were very subtle; so much so that some would hardly have discerned wherein the sin lay, had he complied with them. This, however, will be considered under a following Head. We need only remark, at present, that herein he acted like a deceiver, and appeared to be, as he is elsewhere called, 'the old serpent.' In the third temptation, when he tempted our Saviour to fall down and worship him, he openly discovered his own vileness, and blasphemously usurped that glory which is due to God alone.—Again, in these temptations he insinuates that some advantage would accrue to our Saviour from his compliance with them. Generally, when he tempts us, also, he makes an overture of some advantage which we shall gain by our compliance. The advantage he proposed by the first temptation, was that Christ, by complying with it, might prevent his starving with hunger. By the second, he proposed that he might gain popular applause, by casting himself down from the temple among the people who were walking near it, that they might admire him for the wonderful action. In both these temptations, also, he urges him to give a proof of his being the Son of God, by which means his doctrine might be more readily received. In the third temptation, indeed, the advantage is altogether carnal, and such as, had Satan considered the holiness of the Person he was speaking to, and his contempt of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, he might easily have supposed that our Saviour would have despised the overture, as well as abhorred the action.—Farther, we may observe that, in the second temptation, the devil refers to a promise contained in scripture, and so puts Christ upon that which carries in it the appearance of duty, namely, his depending upon the divine protection, in expectation that God would give his angels charge over him. But he quotes the scripture fallaciously, by leaving out a very material thing contained in it, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways;' <sup>r</sup> whereby it is implied, that none have a right to depend on the divine protection, but they who are in the way of duty, which Christ would not have been had he complied with this temptation.—Another thing we observe is, that our Saviour not only refused to comply with the temptation, in all these three instances, but he assigned a reason of his refusal, whereby it appears that he acted with judgment. Hereby we are instructed not only to refuse to comply with Satan's temptations, but to be able to give a reason of our refusal.—Moreover, as our Saviour answers all the temptations, by referring to scripture, which he adhered to as a rule to direct his conduct, and as by this course he expressed the greatest deference to it; so he teaches us to do the same, as the psalmist says, 'By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.' <sup>s</sup> It is by 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,' that we 'quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.' <sup>t</sup>

We shall now proceed to consider the three temptations in particular, together with our Saviour's answer to each of them. We shall do this in the order in which they are related by the evangelist Matthew. <sup>u</sup>

The first temptation was, that he would prove his being the Son of God, by commanding stones to be made bread. The subtilty of this temptation consists in its seeming to be not only lawful but necessary for Christ, on some occasions, to give a proof that he was the Son of God; his working of miracles being the way by which this was to be done. Nor would it seem, to some, unlawful for him to work a miracle by turning stones into bread; for we read among other miracles, of his multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude. Why, then, it might be asked, may he not produce bread, in a miraculous manner, as well now, as at any other time? Again, Satan puts him upon working this miracle, from a principle of self-preservation, which is a duty founded in the law of nature, to supply himself with necessary food, being an hungered; and, if it was lawful for him to produce bread to feed others, was it not lawful to do the same for his own subsistence, especially as he was in a place in which food was not to be obtained by any other means? He pretends, moreover, to have a great concern for our Saviour's welfare, that so he might not perish with hunger. He thought to gain an advantage



over him, by a pretence of friendship, as he often does in those temptations he offers to us, to promote our own welfare by unlawful means.

Let us now consider wherein the snare lay, which our Saviour was thoroughly apprized of; and in what respects he would have sinned, had he complied with the temptation. We remark, then, that it was not lawful for him to work a miracle to gratify the devil. A particular reason for this is, that his doing it would have been contrary to the general end and design of his working miracles, which was only for the advantage of his people, who are the proper subjects of conviction by them. For him to work them with any other design, would have been to prostitute a sacred ordinance, or to apply it to a person to whom it did not belong. When the woman of Canaan came to him, beseeching him to work a miracle, in casting the devil out of her daughter, she being not a member of the Jewish church nor one of 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' our Saviour tells her that it was 'not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs,' and that he was not 'sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,'<sup>x</sup> that is, he was to work miracles for the conviction of those only who were the proper subjects of conviction. Nor, doubtless, would he have wrought the miracle at her request, had she not been a proper subject of conviction; which she was, as an elect person, though not by nature an Israelite. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, the devil was not a subject of conviction, and therefore Christ was not obliged to prove himself the Son of God to him; for which reason he would have sinned, had he complied with his temptation. But had it been otherwise, it does not seem necessary, at this time, for him to prove himself to be the Son of God; for his being so had but a little before been sufficiently attested by a voice from heaven; so that to work a miracle to confirm it at present, would argue a kind of disbelief of that testimony. Again, for Christ to work a miracle for his own subsistence, seems unaccordant with the main design of his working miracles, which, as was before hinted, was his people's conviction that he was the Messiah. Accordingly, it does not sufficiently appear that he ever provided for the necessities of himself or his family in such a way.<sup>y</sup> But suppose he had at any time subsisted himself by working a miracle, it would have argued a distrust of the providence of God to have supplied his hunger, at present, in that way; as if God, who had hitherto preserved him without food, could not have continued to do so, as long as he was in the wilderness. It would also have been contrary to one design of his being led thither by the Spirit; which was, that he might humble himself by fasting, as well as conflict with Satan's temptations.

Let us now consider Christ's answer to the first temptation that was offered by the devil. This is contained in verse 4, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' The scripture here referred to, is Deut. viii. 3, where we have the very same words; which, as they are applied by our Saviour to repel this temptation, imply that man has a better life to secure, than that which is maintained by bread, namely, the life of the soul. Accordingly, it is said, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.'<sup>z</sup> If we understand the passage in this sense,

x Matt. xv. 22, 26.

y Some ancient and modern writers have supposed, that our Saviour provided for the necessities of his parents in a miraculous way. But the argument which they bring to prove this, is not sufficiently conclusive, namely, that when he wrought his first public miracle, in Cana of Galilee, mentioned in John ii., his mother desired him to work a miracle to supply them at the marriage-feast with wine, verse 3, which, they suppose, she would never have thought of, had he not, some time before, wrought miracles in private to supply her necessities, or provide food for her family. But this does not follow from her desiring him to do it now; since she might know, that, when he had entered on his public ministry, he was to work miracles, and therefore desired him, on this occasion, to put forth the first instance of his divine power therein. Again, this is said to be the beginning of miracles which he did in Cana of Galilee, verse 11, and probably the first miracle which he wrought in any place. Indeed, his reply to her, when she desired that he would work the miracle, seems to imply, that he had never wrought miracles to provide for her family. He says, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' which is, as if he had said, my working miracles is no part of that obedience which I owe to thee, nor art thou to expect any private advantage thereby; for these are to be wrought with another view.

z Luke xii. 15.

it is as if he had said, 'If I comply with this temptation, I should sin against my own soul; and, by using unlawful means to support my natural life, should lose that spiritual life, which consists in the divine favour.' Or rather, the meaning of the passage is, that it is by the word of God's power that our lives are upheld. Now, though this power is ordinarily exerted in the use of means, by applying the proper food which God gives us; yet it can sustain us without it, when we are called, in an extraordinary manner by him, to depend upon it, and have ground to conclude, as our Saviour now had, that our dependence shall not be in vain. Christ had depended upon it, for almost forty days, since he first was brought into the wilderness; and he therefore concluded, that it was his duty to exercise the same dependence so long as he was there.

The second temptation was that in which Satan endeavoured to persuade him to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, expecting that God would preserve him safe from danger. He pretended that 'God would give his angels charge concerning him, and that in their hands they should bear him up, lest at any time he should dash his foot against a stone.' This was a snare laid by the subtle adversary for his life. In this as well as in the former temptation, he solicited him to distrust the providence of God; and our Saviour's reply contains an intimation of his firm resolution to depend upon it, for his farther preservation, though without the necessary food of life. Now Satan tempts him, since he is resolved to depend on the power and providence of God, to do this in an unlawful way; which is no other than a presuming on the divine protection without a sufficient warrant. He tempts him, also, to the sin of self-murder, which would be the consequence of his presumption. For, if providence did not preserve him, which he had not sufficient ground to conclude that it would, when engaged in an unlawful action, such as throwing himself down from the temple would have been, his doing this would certainly have proved his death. The tempter had it in view, also, to put a stop to the work of our redemption, and defeat the great design of Christ's coming into the world. For if Christ had died in this way, by his own hands, he would have contracted guilt, and brought a dishonour to the divine name, rather than have given satisfaction to divine justice, and finished the work he was sent into the world to perform. Moreover, Satan tempts him to a vain-glorious and fruitless action, which was far from answering any valuable end. His throwing himself down from the top of the temple, among the people who were gathered together in that public place of resort, might, it is true, have amused them when they saw a person flying through the air. But it would not have been an expedient to confirm their faith; for there was no explicit appeal to such a miracle for the confirmation of any contested doctrine, so that it would have contradicted the general design of his working miracles, and in that respect been unlawful. Had he been, indeed, at this time, at the bottom of the temple, disputing with the Jews about his mission, and offering to confirm it by such a miracle as they should choose; and, had they insisted on it, that he should go up to the top of the temple, and cast himself down amongst them, and signified that this miracle should decide the controversy for their conviction, I do not apprehend that it would have been unlawful for him to have done it; nor would it have been an act of presumption for him to expect divine protection in so doing. But the case was otherwise at present. The devil, who was assaulting him in the wilderness, as was formerly observed, was no proper subject of conviction; and none of his people were present, to desire that this miracle should be wrought in order that they might believe.

Having thus considered the matter of the second temptation in general, it may not be amiss for us to inquire into the meaning of those words which are generally considered as preparatory to it: 'The devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.'<sup>a</sup> The most common opinion of those who give their sense of this scripture, is that the devil had power over the body of Christ, to carry it from place to place. This they reckon not to be an improbable supposition, from the account which some give, who write on the subject of witchcraft, of persons being so carried by him in a preternatural way. These relations,



however, have not much weight; and many persons of judgment question their truth. But whether they be true or false, they make nothing for the purpose for which they are brought. We do not question that the devil, by divine permission, might carry persons, by a violent motion, from place to place; but whether our Saviour was carried by him from the wilderness to the top of the temple, is the question to be debated. They who suppose this to have been really done, either think that Christ went there together with, and at the instigation of the devil, without any thing preternatural in his being conveyed thither by him; or that the devil carried him thither from the wilderness through the air. The latter is the more commonly received opinion. But we cannot see sufficient reason to acquiesce in either of them. As to the former opinion, I cannot think it lawful for our Saviour to go from the wilderness to the temple at the instigation of the devil; for that would be to go in the way of temptation, without a divine warrant. Had the Spirit of God carried him thither, and encouraged him to throw himself down thence, it would have been his duty to do it, as much as it was to abide in the wilderness, being led thither by the Holy Spirit. But as it would have been unlawful for him to come into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil; so it would have been no less unlawful to go thence to the temple at his desire. Moreover, it may be greatly questioned, whether our Saviour was fit to take so long a journey, as from the wilderness to the temple, after he had fasted forty days, and, it may be, his strength impaired. Indeed, when we read<sup>b</sup> of his return out of the wilderness into his own country, it was by the power of the Spirit, which supplied his want of strength for so great a journey. Hence, as his coming thither was by the Spirit, so his safe conduct back was by the same Spirit. Nor can we suppose that he went out of the wilderness till the Spirit carried him out into his own country: so that it does not appear that he went to the temple by the solicitation of the devil, to be tempted by him there, and afterwards returned to the wilderness to submit to his last temptation. While we reject this opinion, we cannot altogether adopt the other, which, as was formerly observed, is the most common, namely, that the devil was permitted to carry our Saviour through the air, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple. This, it is said, seems, for various reasons, to be the more direct and literal sense of the words of the evangelist, relating to the matter. But the pinnacle of the temple, upon which the devil is supposed to have set our Saviour, was, as some writers observe, the sharp point, or apex, or extremity of a cone, on which it was not possible for the smallest bird to perch; so that a man could not stand upon it, and consequently Christ could not be said to be set upon it. To this it is generally replied, that by his being set on a pinnacle of the temple, is meant his being set upon one of the battlements, near one of the spires of the temple, on which men may conveniently stand. Here it is supposed the devil placed our Saviour, and then tempted him to cast himself down. But suppose this to be sufficient to account for those words which speak of Christ's being set on a pinnacle of the temple, and so to enervate the force of the preceding reasoning, let it be farther considered, that it does not seem probable that the devil should have so much power over our Saviour as to carry him from place to place at his will. But if it be replied to this, that it contains no absurdity for God to suffer it, and that it was not any moral evil in Christ to be thus carried, who must be supposed to have been altogether passive in the matter, let it be farther considered that, if the devil really carried him through the air, from the wilderness to the temple, he could not well have done so in an invisible way. To suppose that he could is contrary to the nature of things; for even the motion of a bird, which is a far less creature, through the air, if it be in the day-time, is not invisible. Now, if this preternatural motion of our Saviour's body through the air was visible, how comes it to pass that no notice was taken of it by the Jews, especially as it would have been as remarkable an occurrence as his flying from a pinnacle of the temple to the ground? Some of them, doubtless, would have been amused at it; and probably it would have given them occasion to them to have said something concerning this preternatural event. Others, it may be, would have reproached him for it; and

from his flying by the power of the devil, would have taken occasion to say, that his other miracles were wrought by the same power, which would have given plausibility to their objection when they said, 'He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' It may be farther objected, that the devil might carry him to the top of the temple by night, and so his motion through the air not be observed. But this seems very improbable; for then he must have continued there all night, till the people were gathered together next day on the plain at the foot of it, otherwise his casting himself down would not have answered the end designed, there being none of the Jews present to observe the miracle; and so the devil might have spared the pains of carrying him to a pinnacle of the temple, and might have as well tempted him to have cast himself down from a precipice in the wilderness. We own, notwithstanding, that it might be replied to this, that the devil might raise a thick fog in the air in the day-time, so that the people could not see him conveyed from the wilderness to the temple. But, though this was possible, it does not seem probable, especially when we consider the other reasons brought against this supposition in general. We must have recourse, therefore, to some other sense in which this scripture is to be understood. Some suppose that the event occurred only in vision, and that Christ continued all the while in the wilderness. This opinion accounts, in some measure, for several difficulties which would arise from the supposition of the devil's having power over him to carry him from place to place; and it agrees with the other scriptures which speak of his being tempted forty days in the wilderness. Yet the opinion does not appear very probable, as it supposes the devil to have had a greater power over Christ's imagination than can readily be allowed. It seems also to contain an absurdity; for Christ could not be said to work a miracle by throwing himself from a pinnacle of the temple, if he were all the while standing in the wilderness; and what proof would that have been of his being the Son of God? It may be objected, that many things are said by the prophets to be done in vision, which could not well be said to be done otherwise. Thus, the prophet Ezekiel, when he was among the captives in Babylon, is said to have been 'taken by a lock of his head, and, by the Spirit, lifted up between the earth and the heaven, and brought in the visions of God to Jerusalem;'<sup>e</sup> the meaning of which is, that he had an impression to this effect made on his imagination, not much unlike a dream, which inclined him, at the same time, to think himself carried to Jerusalem, and to behold the idolatry which was practised there. But this was a divine impression upon the soul of the prophet; and we are not inclined to think that, because God has sometimes appeared in vision to his people, the devil was suffered to do so with respect to our Saviour, or to have power over his imagination to give it that disturbance which would be the result. There is another sense, then, a little different from this, in which we cannot but acquiesce, though not without great deference to those who are otherwise minded, namely, that the devil had neither power over Christ's body, nor actually carried him from the wilderness to a pinnacle in the temple, on the one hand; nor had he power to give disturbance to his imagination, on the other; but that he tempted him, or endeavoured to persuade him to go with him to Jerusalem, which is called the Holy City, and then to go up to the top of the temple, and so cast himself down among the people. The principal objection brought against this sense of the words is taken from its being contrary to the literal or grammatical sense of them, inasmuch as the devil is said 'to have taken him up into the Holy City, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple;' words which seem to imply more than merely his discoursing with him of going thither, and casting himself down thence. The only answer which needs be given to this objection is, that, as what is done in vision is represented in scripture as if it had been actually done, why may we not suppose that what is offered in conversation may be represented as if it had been actually done, especially considering that what was only discoursed of between persons, is sometimes said to be done? Thus, when the chief butler reports the conversation which he and the chief baker had with Joseph in the prison, he represents Joseph as doing what he only spake of, when he says, 'Me he restored unto mine office, and him



he hanged.<sup>d</sup> There is, therefore, no absurdity in supposing that the devil's 'carrying' our Saviour 'to Jerusalem,' and 'setting him on a pinnacle of the temple,' denotes nothing else but his tempting him to go thither. If we understand the passage in this sense, the temptation is not less subtle or pernicious in its design, nor our Saviour's answer less apposite and to the purpose, than if we suppose the devil to have had power to carry him thither.

We shall now consider Christ's answer to the temptation. This is contained in the words, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Here he refers to the words of Moses,<sup>e</sup> which, though they more immediately relate to the people's 'murmuring,' and questioning whether 'God was among them or not,'<sup>f</sup> on which account the name of the place was called Massah; yet, as there are various ways of tempting God, this might well be applied by our Saviour to his own case, in answer to Satan's temptation. Thus understood, they are as if he had said, 'I will not tempt the Lord my God, by desiring a farther proof of my sonship, which has so lately been attested by a voice from heaven;' or rather, 'I will not tempt him, so as to expect his protection, when engaged, according to thy desire, in an unlawful action.'

The third and last temptation, which was the most audacious, vile, and blasphemous of all, is narrated in verses 8, 9, in which Satan makes to him an overture of 'the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof,' provided 'he would fall down and worship him.' Here we may observe something preparatory to the temptation. It is said, 'The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.' Whether this was actually done, or he only tempted him to go up into an high mountain, which was more convenient for this purpose, I will not peremptorily determine. There are not so many difficulties attending the supposition that it was actually done, as there were in the former temptation. If it be concluded that it was actually done, it is very much to be doubted whether there was any mountain so high that he might thence have a prospect of the kingdoms of the world; or, if there was an exceeding high mountain in the wilderness where Christ was tempted, yet, if we consider the nature of vision, there are two things which would hinder a person's seeing the kingdoms of the world, though it were from the highest mountain. One of these is the convexity or unevenness of the surface of the earth. This would hinder the strongest eye from seeing many kingdoms of the world. Besides, the sight would be hindered by other mountains intervening. The other circumstance is, that if there were several kingdoms or countries which might be beheld from the top of an exceeding high mountain, the organ of sight is too weak to reach many miles. Hence, when Moses was commanded by God to go up to the top of mount Pisgah to take a view of the whole land of Canaan, it is generally thought that there was something miraculous in his strengthening his sight to see to the utmost bounds of the land. Accordingly it is said that 'the Lord showed him all the land.'<sup>g</sup> But this can hardly be applicable to the case before us, relating to the devil's showing our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world. The best and most common sense, therefore, is, that he made a representation of the kingdoms and glories of the world in the air, and presented them to our Saviour's view in a moment; and a mountain was more convenient for this purpose than if he had done it in a valley. This seems to be the most probable sense of the text.

We shall now consider the temptation itself. This is mentioned in ver. 9, 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The evangelist Luke adds, as a farther illustration of this temptation, something which is omitted by Matthew, namely, that 'the power' of conferring a right to the kingdoms of the world, was 'delivered unto him,' and that 'to whomsoever he will, he gives it.'<sup>h</sup> In this temptation, we may observe the abominable pride and insolence of the devil, and his appearing to be the father of lies. Nothing could be more false than for him to assert that the world was given him to dispose of as he pleased. Whatever hand he may have in disposing of it among his subjects, by divine permission,

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xli. 13.  
<sup>h</sup> Luke iv. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. vi. 16.

<sup>f</sup> Exod. xvii. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. xxxiv. 1.

he has no right to do this; so that in his claiming to have such a right we may observe his proud and blasphemous insinuation, in pretending to have a grant from God to dispose of that which he reserves in his own hand, to give as he pleases. Again, all that he pretends to give our Saviour, is 'the kingdoms of the world;' and, he proposes that, in exchange for them, he must quit his right to that better world which he had by inheritance a right to, and a power to dispose of, which the devil has not. Further, he pretends to give our Saviour nothing but what, as God and Mediator, he had a right to. This Satan maliciously questions, when, by the overture he makes of the kingdoms, he insinuates that he must be beholden to him for them. Moreover, he makes his proposal, as an expedient for him to arrive at glory and honour in an easier way, than to attain it by sufferings. The temptation is as if he had said, 'Thou expectest a kingdom beyond this world, but there are many troubles which lie in the way to it. Now, by following my advice, and complying with this temptation, thou mayest avoid those sufferings, and enter into the present possession of the kingdoms and glories of this world.' By offering these kingdoms and the glory of them, it is probable, he makes him an overture of the whole Roman empire. But this our Saviour despises, for he offered it who had no right to give it; and the terms, on which the overture was made, were very dishonourable; and the honour itself was such as he did not value, for his kingdom was not of this world. If he had aimed at earthly grandeur, he might easily have attained it; for we read, that on one occasion, not only might he have been made a king, but the people intended to come and 'make him so by force.'<sup>i</sup> On that occasion, he discovered the little value he had for this honour, by his retiring from them into 'a mountain himself alone,' rather choosing to continue in the low state which he designed to submit to in this world, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Such was the overture made by Satan to our Saviour; and the condition on which he made it, was that he 'should fall down and worship him.' Here we may observe his pride, in pretending to have a right to divine honour, and how he attempts to usurp the throne of God, and that to such a degree that no one must expect favours from him, without giving him that honour which is due to God alone. Again, he boldly and blasphemously tempts Christ to abandon and withdraw himself from his allegiance to God, and, at the same time, to deny his own deity as the object of worship, and thereby to cast away that crown of glory which he has by nature, and to put it on the head of his avowed enemy.

Having thus glanced at Christ's third and last temptation, we may now consider his reply to it, together with the repulse given to the adversary, and the victory obtained over him, who hereupon 'departed from him.' Here we may observe that he again makes use of scripture, referring to what is said therein, in different words, though the sense is the same, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and to him shalt thou cleave.'<sup>k</sup> This is a duty founded not only in scripture, but in the law of nature, and may be proved from the perfections of God, and our relation to him as creatures. Further, our Saviour detests the temptation with the greatest abhorrence, can no longer bear to converse with the blasphemer, and therefore says, 'Get thee hence, Satan.' He commands him to be gone; and Satan immediately leaves him, being, as it were, driven away by his almighty power. This is more than we can do; yet, in a similar case, we ought, as the apostle did, to 'beseech the Lord that he might depart from us,'<sup>l</sup> or to use our Saviour's words on another occasion, 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' Thus Christ's temptations, though very grievous and afflictive, were not only surmounted, but the adversary that assaulted him, was overcome by him, in his own person.

From what has been said concerning Christ's temptations, we infer the desperate and unparalleled boldness of Satan. Though he knew well enough that Christ was the Son of God, and therefore able not only to resist but to destroy him; yet he ventured thus to assault him, though, at other times, he appeared to be afraid of him, and said, 'Art thou come to destroy us before the time?'<sup>m</sup> and elsewhere, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?'<sup>n</sup> Besides, he knew that, by tempt-

i John vi. 15.  
n Matt. viii. 29.

k Deut. vi. 13. and chap. x. 20.

l 2 Cor. xii. 8.

m Mark i. 24.



ing Christ, his own guilt and misery would be increased. But what will not malice, and a deep-rooted hatred of God and godliness, prompt persons to! The attempt was certainly most unfeasible, as well as prejudicial to himself. Did Satan suppose that he should gain a victory over him? Could he think, that he who was God as well as man, was not more than a match for him? It may be, he might hope, that though the human nature of Christ was united to the divine, yet it might be left to itself; and then he thought it more possible to gain some advantages against it. But this was a groundless supposition, and altogether unbecoming the relation which there is between the two natures. It was impossible also that Christ should be overcome—inasmuch as he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his conception—and the unction which he had received from the Holy Ghost, would have effectually secured him from falling. Whether the devil knew this or not, he did not consider it; and therefore his attempt against our Saviour, was an act of the most stupendous folly in him, who is described as the old serpent for his great subtilty. Again, from Christ's temptation we may infer the greatness of his sufferings. It could not but be grievous to him to be insulted, attacked, and the utmost endeavours used to turn him aside from his allegiance to God, by the worst of his enemies. As Satan's temptations are not the smallest part of the affliction of Christ's people; so they cannot be reckoned to have been the smallest part of his own. Yet the issue of them was glorious to himself, and shameful to the enemy that attacked him. This affords encouragement to believers, under the various temptations they are exposed to. They are not, indeed, to think it strange that they are tempted, inasmuch as, in their being so, they are conformed to Jesus Christ, the Captain of their salvation; but they may, from Christ's temptation, be instructed that it is not a sin to be tempted, though it is a sin to comply with Satan's temptations; and therefore they have no ground to conclude, as many do, that they are not God's children, because they are tempted. Moreover, they may hope, not only to be made partakers of Christ's victory, as the fruits and effects of it redound to the salvation of his people, but to receive help and succour from him when they are tempted. He who 'suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted.'<sup>o</sup>

o H. F. ii. 18.

[NOTE 3 T. Christ's 'Emptying Himself.'—Paul does not say, as Dr. Ridgeley represents him, 'Christ emptied himself of his glory,' but simply, 'he emptied himself,' *ἑαυτον κενωσας*. From the structure of the apostle's sentence, it seems clear that this clause states in general terms what the remaining clauses mention in detail. Hence, Christ's 'emptying himself' consisted, not in laying aside his glory, but in his taking upon himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, 'ἑαυτον κενωσας, μορphen δουλου λαβων, εν ὁμοιωματι ανθρωπων γινωμενος' και σχηματι υἱου θεου ὡς ανθρωπος. His glory was essential and unchangeable. In respect to everything which he was in his preincarnate state,—everything which he is in his divine nature,—he is 'the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.' Even in his deepest humiliation, while incarnate on earth, his very disciples, dim though their views were of his character, and obscure their conceptions of his majesty, 'beheld in him the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. Very incautious and unwarrantable language is often used on the subject of the divine glory of Christ in connexion with his incarnation,—language which is more suited to the Arian creed than the orthodox, and which ought to be carefully avoided, as tending to mar our ideas of our Lord's essential deity.—ED.]

## CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN AND AFTER HIS DEATH.

### QUESTION XLIX. *How did Christ humble himself in his death?*

ANSWER. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors, having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

### QUESTION L. *Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?*

ANSWER. Christ's humiliation after his death, consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, 'He descended into hell.'

*Christ's Humiliation immediately before and in his Death.*

IN considering the subject of these Answers, we are led to take a view of our Saviour, in the last stage of life, exposed to those sufferings which went more immediately before, or attended his death.

1. Let us consider him in his sufferings in the garden, when his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. He desired his disciples, not only as an act of their sympathy with and regard to him in his agony, that they would tarry at a small distance from him, while he went a little farther and prayed, as one who tasted more of the bitterness of that cup which he was to drink, than he had done before; but he pressed this upon them, as what was necessary to their own advantage, when he said, 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.'<sup>a</sup> But they seemed very little concerned, either for his distress, or for their own impending danger; for, when he returned, he found them asleep, and upbraided them for it. 'What,' said he, 'could ye not watch with me one hour?'<sup>a</sup> Afterwards, too, though he had given them this kind and gentle reproof for their unaccountable stupidity, and had repeated his charge that they should watch and pray; yet, when he came a second time, he found them asleep again.<sup>r</sup> Now it was, doubtless, an addition to his afflictions, that they who were under the highest obligations to him, should be so little concerned for him.

2. He was next betrayed by Judas, a pretended friend; and his being so added to his affliction. His being betrayed does not argue any unwillingness in him to suffer, as is evident from his own words, some time before, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?'<sup>s</sup> as also from his going up to Jerusalem with that design, knowing that his hour was at hand. How easily might he have declined this journey, had he been unwilling to suffer? And, if he thought it his duty to be at Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover—which was not absolutely necessary, as all were not obliged to go thither at that feast—he might, notwithstanding, had he been unwilling to suffer, have gone thither privately. Instead of doing so, however, he made a more public entrance into it than was usual, riding in triumph, and accepting the loud acclamations and hosannas of the multitude; which, any one might suppose, would draw forth the envy of his inveterate enemies, and sharpen their malice against him, and thereby hasten the execution of their bloody design.—Again, that he did not suffer unwillingly, appears from the fact, that, when the band of officers, being led by Judas, was sent to apprehend him, 'he asked them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus saith unto them, I am he.' Upon this, we are told, 'they went backward, and fell to the ground,'<sup>t</sup> and gave him an opportunity to make his escape, had he intended to decline these last sufferings. But he not only delivered himself into their hands, but prohibited the overture of a rescue which Peter attempted in his favour.<sup>u</sup> As to his being betrayed into the hands of his enemies, by one of his disciples, this is often mentioned as a very considerable part of his sufferings. The price which the traitor demanded, or which was the most that they would give him for the barbarous and inhuman action, was thirty pieces of silver.<sup>x</sup> This was foretold by the prophet, and is represented as an instance of the highest contempt which could be cast upon our Lord. He calls it 'a goodly price that I was prized at of them.'<sup>y</sup> It was the price of 'a servant,' or slave, when 'pushed by an ox, so that he died.'<sup>z</sup> This circumstance shows how little he was valued by those who were under the highest obligations to him. And providence permitted his betrayer to be a part of his sufferings, that we may learn from it, that hypocrites sometimes mix themselves with his faithful servants, and that, notwithstanding the mask or disguise of religion which they affect, their hypocrisy will, one time or other, be made manifest. This was a wound given, not by an open enemy, but by a pretended friend, and therefore was the more grievous. It might also give occasion to some to cast a reproach on

p Matt. xxvi. 38, 39, 41. q Ver. 40. r Ver. 43. s Luke xii. 50. t John xviii. 4—6.  
u Ver. 10, 11. x A piece of silver is the same which is elsewhere called a shekel, which was valued at about half-a-crown, English money; so that the whole price for which our Saviour was sold into their hands, was no more than three pounds fifteen shillings. y Zech. xi. 13.  
z Exod. xxi. 32.



his followers—for what will not malice sometimes suggest? as if they were all like Judas, and as if their pretence to religion were no other than hypocrisy.

3. Another part of Christ's humiliation consisted in his being forsaken by his disciples. We read that, when he was apprehended, 'all the disciples forsook him and fled.'<sup>a</sup>

From this fact we may learn how unable the best of God's people are to exercise that holy courage and fortitude which is necessary in trying dispensations of providence, especially when destitute of extraordinary assistance from the Spirit of God. Moreover, the event was ordered by providence in order to enhance Christ's sufferings. In these none stood with him to comfort or strengthen him. The apostle Paul says concerning himself, 'At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me,'<sup>b</sup>—a circumstance which could not be otherwise than very afflictive. But there was a farther design of providence in permitting the disciples to forsake Christ, namely, that they might not suffer with him. Accordingly, it is observed by one of the evangelists, that when our Saviour was apprehended by the officers, he desired leave of them that his disciples might 'go their way.'<sup>c</sup> If they had been apprehended, they might perhaps have been accused, condemned, and crucified with him; which might have given occasion to some to suppose that they bore a part in the purchase of our redemption, which belonged to him alone. It is hence said concerning him, 'I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.'<sup>d</sup>

4. Another part of Christ's sufferings was, that he was disowned and denied by Peter; for this would give occasion to some to think that, while he was insulted and persecuted by his enemies, he was not worthy to be acknowledged by his friends. In the account which the evangelist gives of this matter,<sup>e</sup> we may observe that Peter was not at this time in the way of his duty. Though, probably, it was love to our Saviour, and a desire to see the issue of his trial, which occasioned his going into the high priest's palace; yet he had no call to go thither at present. It was a running into the midst of danger; especially considering that our Saviour, as stated in the scripture just referred to, had got leave for his disciples to withdraw. Peter ought therefore to have withdrawn; for, as we are not to decline sufferings when called to bear them, so we are not, without a sufficient warrant, to rush into them, or to go, as he did, in the way of temptation.—Again, it was not shame only which induced him to deny our Saviour, but fear. For, it is probable, he might be informed that the high priest had asked Christ concerning his disciples, as well as his doctrine; so that he might think that, by owning him and his doctrine, he might be exposed to suffer with him. But this, notwithstanding his self-confident resolution a little before, when he said, 'Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee,'<sup>f</sup> he was now afraid to do.—Farther, he was not only accosted by the damsel, who told him that he was 'with Jesus of Galilee;' but he was attacked by 'one of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,' who said, 'Did I not see thee in the garden with him?'<sup>g</sup> This still increased his fear; for that person not only appeared as a witness against him, and charged him with having been with Christ in the garden, but also intimated that he attempted to rescue him, and that by force of arms. His having done this might, as he apprehended, render him obnoxious to the lash of the law, as endeavouring to make a riot, for which he concluded that he was liable to suffer punishment. The circumstance, too, that the person whose ear he cut off was the high priest's kinsman, would lay him still more open to the high priest's resentment. Thus Peter, through the weakness of his faith, and the prevalence of his fear, denied our Saviour. His denying him, moreover, was thrice repeated, with curses and execrations annexed to it; which still increased his guilt, and tended to expose religion, as well as to cast a reproach on our Saviour, who was then bearing his testimony to the truth.

5. Another part of Christ's humiliation consisted in his being scorned and rejected by the world,—scorned as if he had been inferior to them. Accordingly he

a Matt. xxvi. 56.

e Matt. xxvi. 69—72.

b 2 Tim. iv. 16.

f Matt. xxvi. 35.

c John xviii. 8.

g John xviii. 26.

d Isa. lxiii. 3.

is represented by the psalmist as saying, 'I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.'<sup>h</sup> This was doubtless a malicious design to bring his doctrine into contempt, and to fill the minds of men with prejudice against it, and make them ashamed to own it. Our Saviour puts these together, when he speaks of persons being 'ashamed of him, and of his words.' They had often rejected him by their unbelief; and their crime in doing so was the greater that they were under the greatest obligations to the contrary. How often did he invite them in the most affectionate manner to come to him, annexing to his invitation a promise of eternal life! Yet we find that he had reason to complain as he does, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.'<sup>k</sup>

Here we may observe the different temper of the Jews before he appeared publicly among them, from what it was afterwards. When John the Baptist, his fore-runner, told them that he would shortly be made manifest to Israel, multitudes flocked to his ministry, counted him as a great prophet, and rejoiced in his light for a season, and at the same time were baptized, and professed their willingness to yield obedience to Christ. But all this was upon a groundless supposition that he would appear as an earthly monarch, erect a temporal kingdom, bring all other powers into subjection to it, and so deliver them from the Roman yoke, and advance them to great honours in the world. But when they saw it otherwise, and that he appeared in a low humbled state, and professed that his kingdom was not of this world, and showed that his subjects must seek for a glory which lies beyond it, and which cannot be beheld but by faith, and must, in the expectation of it, take up their cross and follow him, immediately they were offended. Accordingly, the prophet foretells that he should be 'for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel';<sup>l</sup> and the psalmist styles him, 'the stone which the builders refused';<sup>m</sup> both of which predictions are applied to Christ by the apostle Peter.<sup>n</sup> This was foretold also by Simeon, when our Saviour was in his infancy: 'Behold,' said he, 'this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against.'<sup>o</sup> The offence taken at him is intimated also to have been almost universal, as appeared from the small number who adhered to him when he was on earth. This gave him occasion to say, 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.'<sup>p</sup>

Such was the treatment he met with throughout the whole course of his ministry, when they loaded him with the most injurious reproaches. But, immediately before his death, they filled up the measure of their iniquity, by reproaching him to the utmost. Then, it is observed, they blasphemed him and cast contempt on him, with respect to all those offices which he executes as Mediator. As to his prophetic office, with what abominable profaneness did they speak of the sacred gift of prophecy, which their fathers always counted a peculiar glory, which was conferred upon some of them, and by which they were honoured above all other nations in the world! What contempt did they cast on him who had sufficiently proved himself to be greater than all other prophets, when, as is related concerning them, 'they smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?'<sup>q</sup> They expressed their blasphemy also in contemning his priestly office, when they said, 'He saved others, himself he cannot save';<sup>r</sup> and likewise, in contemning his kingly office, when, in derision, they put on him 'a scarlet robe, platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!'<sup>s</sup> They expressed the greatest contempt of him also, by preferring to him a vile and notorious criminal, who was a robber and a murderer. Accordingly, as the prophet says, 'He was numbered with the transgressors,' as if he had been the greatest of them; though he had 'done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.'<sup>t</sup> Hence, the apostle tells them, 'Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto

h Psal. xxii. 6, 7.  
m Psal. cxviii. 22.  
q Matt. xxvi. 67, 68.

i Mark viii. 38.  
n 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.  
r Chap. xxvii. 42.

k John v. 40.  
o Luke ii. 34.  
s Verses 28, 29.

l Isa. viii. 14.  
p Matt. xi. 6.  
t Isa. liii. 9, 12.



you.'<sup>a</sup> When Pilate made an overture to release him, 'they cried, with one consent, Not this man, but Barabbas.'<sup>x</sup>

From the treatment which Christ received we may learn that the best of men are not to expect to pass through the world without reproach or contempt, how exact, innocent, or blameless soever their conversation be. Again, we are not to judge of persons or things, especially in matters of religion, merely by the opinion of the world concerning them; since it is no uncommon thing for religion itself to be held in contempt, as well as those who adhere to it. Moreover, we ought not to have respect to the praise or esteem of men, as a motive to induce us to choose and adhere to the way of God and godliness. Our Saviour says, 'I receive not honour from men,'<sup>y</sup> that is, I value it not, so as to regulate my conversation thereby; and then he adds, 'How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?'<sup>z</sup> Further, let us not think the worse of Christ or his gospel that they are reproached; but rather, as the apostle advises, 'let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach,'<sup>a</sup> and not only be content to bear it, but count it our honour; as he says elsewhere concerning himself, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>b</sup> Again, let us take heed that, while we seem to honour Christ by our profession, and testify our abhorrence of the contempt which was cast on him by his enemies, we do not reproach him by our practice. Let us beware of doing so, either by sinning presumptuously, which is called 'a reproaching of the Lord,'<sup>c</sup> or by not reproving those who blaspheme and revile him, and bearing our testimony against them; for, by not doing this, we shall partake with them in their crime.

6. Our Saviour was condemned by Pilate. The former indignities offered him were without any pretence or form of law; but now he is set before a court of judicature, and there tried, and sentence passed immediately before his crucifixion. In this they had no regard to the exercise of justice, or desire to proceed in a legal way with any good and honourable design. They wished simply to prevent the inconvenience which would have arisen from their putting him to death in a riotous and tumultuous manner, without the form of a trial. This they had, in some particular instances, at other times, designed or attempted to do; but they thought it not a safe way of proceeding; for they might afterwards have been called to an account for it by the civil magistrate, as the town-clerk says, on occasion of the tumult at Ephesus, 'We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar.'<sup>d</sup> Accordingly, our Saviour having been apprehended, was brought before Pilate, the Roman governor; and there were the chief priests and elders met together, as his accusers and prosecutors; and the whole process was the most notorious instance of injustice which ever was practised in any court of judicature in the world. Whatever pretence of law there might be, the assembly was certainly tumultuous. It is not usual for persons who are tried for capital matters to be insulted, not only by the rude multitude of spectators who are present, but by the judge himself. But our Saviour was so insulted; for he was spit upon, buffeted, and smitten with the palms of their hands; and Pilate, with a sarcastic sneer, unbecoming the character of a judge, said, 'Behold the Man;' 'Behold your King.'<sup>e</sup>

Here we may observe concerning his persecutors, that they sought false witnesses against him, that is, they endeavoured to persuade or bribe any whom they could find among the most vile and profligate wretches, to come in against him. Yet they could not bring the matter to bear for some time. Accordingly, it is said, 'They sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none.'<sup>f</sup> The evidence which many gave was not regarded; and they were set aside. At last they found two, whom they depended on, as legal evidences. But it is observed that 'their witness did not agree together';<sup>g</sup> and even if they had agreed in their testimony, the matter alleged against him was no crime, namely, 'We heard him say, I will de-

u Acts iii. 14.

a Heb. xiii. 13.

e John xix. 5, 14.

x John xviii. 39, 40.

b Gal. vi. 14.

f Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.

y Chap. v. 41.

c Numb. xv. 30.

g Mark xiv. 59.

z Ver. 44.

d Acts xix. 40.

stroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.<sup>h</sup> This refers to what he had said when he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and when, foretelling his resurrection from the dead, he used this metaphorical way of speaking, that when they had destroyed this temple, meaning his body, he would raise it up in three days. We will suppose that the Jews, then present, did not understand what he meant by this expression, or that he did not explain it, as the evangelist does. But let them understand it in what sense they would, it was no crime for him to say so. Hence, when it was witnessed against him, though the high priest urged him to make a reply, 'he held his peace, and answered nothing,' because there was nothing alleged worth an answer. The thing he was charged with carried its own confutation, and inferred not the least degree of guilt in him. This his enemies themselves seemed to be sensible of; and therefore they asked him the trying question, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?' expecting that his reply would have afforded matter for them to proceed upon for his conviction. Our Saviour gives a direct answer to the question, saying, 'I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'<sup>i</sup> Here he was called to give a reply; the question was worthy of an answer; and therefore he does not, on this occasion, hold his peace, but witnessed a good confession, though he knew that his doing so would cost him his life.

Some things may be observed concerning Pilate's conduct in his trial. He acted contrary to the good advice which was given him by his wife. In this advice she told him that 'in a dream she had suffered many things because of Christ,'<sup>k</sup> and as the evangelist thinks it worthy to be noticed that the advice was occasioned by a dream, we have ground to conclude that the dream was a divine one,—a circumstance which rendered the advice more solemn, and peculiarly deserving his regard.—Again, he acted against the dictates of his own conscience. For 'he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy,'<sup>l</sup> and therefore he ought to have stopped all farther proceedings, as in cases of malicious prosecutions. That he acted against his conscience, appears also from the fact that 'he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.'<sup>m</sup>—Moreover, he appears to have been a very mean-spirited man, and therefore was apprehensive that the Jews, had he released our Saviour, would have accused him to Cesar for sparing one whom they would have pretended to have been a usurper, and a rebel, inasmuch as he styled himself 'King of the Jews.' Accordingly, he feared that he should have been turned out of his place, or otherwise punished, provided the matter were not fully heard, or the misrepresentations which might be made of it were believed by him. This seems the main reason of his delivering our Saviour up to them to be crucified. Accordingly, Pilate at first 'sought to release him;' but upon the Jews saying, 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend,' he 'brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat,' 'and,' in haste, 'delivered him unto them to be crucified.'<sup>n</sup>—Further, when he thought it his interest to comply with the Jews in this matter, he did not pass sentence on him himself; thinking, perhaps, that to do so would not be advisable, as being contrary to the profession he had, a little before, made of his innocence. But he asked his prosecutors, what he should do with him; which was an unprecedented instance of barbarity and injustice, in one who had the character of a judge or magistrate.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>h</sup> Mark xiv. 58.

<sup>l</sup> Mark xv. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Verse 62.

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxvii. 24.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xxvii. 19.

<sup>n</sup> John xix. 12, 13, 16.

<sup>o</sup> Pilate is characterized, by various writers, as a man of inhuman cruelty, insatiable avarice, and inflexible obstinacy. An instance of his cruelty we have mentioned in Luke xiii. 1. in his 'mingling the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices;' that is, as some suppose, he fell upon them without a fair trial, and murdered them, while they were engaged in a solemn act of religious worship, offering sacrifice at Jerusalem, in one of the public festivals; pretending, though without a fair trial, that they were of the same mind with Judas of Galilee, who had persuaded many of the Galileans to refuse to give tribute to Cesar. A learned writer [Vid. Grot. in Luke xiii. 1.] supposes, not only that this was the occasion of his inhuman action, which is not improbable, though Josephus makes no mention of it; but also that this is one of those things which were reported to the Emperor, who did not approve of it. Afterwards there were other instances of his oppression and mal-administration laid before Tiberias, which, had not that Emperor's death prevented it, would have



7. Our Saviour was tormented by his persecutors, scourged, buffeted, smitten with the palms of their hands, crowned with thorns. These thorns, as most divines suppose, pierced his head, drew blood from it, and occasioned part of the torments he endured. We may add, that they compelled him to bear his cross, till his strength was so exhausted that he could carry it no longer. They then obliged 'one Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear it;' or, as Luke says, 'to bear it after him,'<sup>p</sup> that is, as some suppose, to help him to carry it, going behind, and bearing a part of its weight. These things he endured immediately before his crucifixion, from wicked men, divested of all humanity, as well as religion. But still there is something more afflictive which he endured.

8. He conflicted with the terrors of death, and felt and bore the weight of God's wrath. These were the sufferings which he endured, more especially in his soul. We may observe that the death he was going to endure was exceedingly formidable to him, and accompanied with great terrors; so that there must certainly have been some bitter ingredients in it, more than in the death of others. If many of the martyrs who have been, as the apostle says, 'pressed out of measure above strength,'<sup>q</sup> that is, have suffered as much as frail nature could well bear, have endured death without any dread of the wrath of God, the sting and bitterness thereof being taken away; why, it may be asked, should our Saviour, who never contracted the least degree of guilt, have had any conflict in his own spirit? To this it may be replied, that there were some things in his death which rendered it more formidable than it ever was to any of his saints and martyrs.

It is more than probable that the powers of darkness had a great hand in setting before his view the terrors of the wrath of God due to sin; which none are better able to do, than they who are the subjects of it. Accordingly, it is observed in this Answer, that he conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness. The devil is sometimes said to have 'the power of death,'<sup>r</sup> that is, if the Spirit of God do not come in with his comforting presence, but Satan be suffered to do what he can to fill the soul with horror, he hath certainly power to make death beyond measure terrible. His design herein, with respect to our Saviour, was either to drive him to despair, induce him to repent of his undertaking what he came into the world to accomplish, or, at least, to induce him to take some indirect methods to decline suffering. That Satan had some hand in this matter we infer from what our Saviour says when, considering himself as fallen into the hands of his enraged enemies, he tells them, not only that this was 'their hour,' that is, the time in which they were suffered to express their rage and malice against him, but 'the hour of the power of darkness.'<sup>s</sup>

His death was in itself more terrible than the death of his people, when the sting and bitterness of it are taken away from them. Accordingly, it is farther observed in this Answer, that he felt and bore the weight of God's wrath; which was the punishment of the sins of his people, for whom he suffered. It was on this account that he is said to have 'begun to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;' to have cried out, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;' and to have prayed that, 'if it were possible,' this part of his sufferings 'might pass from him.'<sup>t</sup> We cannot suppose that he was afraid of death; but the wrath of God was what he principally feared. As this wrath is in itself so terrible, he might well be supposed to be amazed, and exceeding sorrowful, at the view of it, not for his own sin, but ours; and yet herein not to be guilty of any sin himself. That this may farther appear, let it be considered that, as 'he bore our sins,'<sup>u</sup> and 'it pleased the Lord to bruise him' for them;<sup>x</sup> so he bore every thing which was

occasioned his disgrace. Afterwards he fell under the displeasure of Tiberius' successor, and was not only turned out of his procuratorship, but reduced to such miserable circumstances, that he laid violent hands on himself. [Vid. Phil. Jud. lib. de leg. ad Caj. et Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 5. et Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 7.] We may well suppose, therefore, that though he had, in other respects, no regard to the Jews, yet on this occasion he feared lest they should report his vile actions to the Emperor, and that they would represent this to him with a malicious insinuation, that he was his enemy, because he spared our Saviour. This occasioned him to deliver him up to them, to do what they would with him.

p John xix. 17, compared with Luke xxiii. 26.

s Luke xxii. 53. t Mark xiv. 33—36.

q 2 Cor. i. 8.

u 1 Pet. ii. 24.

r Heb. ii. 14.

x Isa. liii. 6

a punishment of them, excepting some circumstances which are peculiar to us, and which were inconsistent with his perfect holiness, and the efficacy of his sufferings to take away the guilt of our sin. We must suppose, therefore, that he bore, that is, had an afflictive sense of, the wrath of God due to it. Nothing less than this could occasion him to sweat drops of blood in his agony in the garden. Had there been no circumstance in his death but merely his leaving this miserable world, in which he had met with such ill treatment, the very fact of his having received that treatment would have rendered his stay in it less desirable. But, when he considered the bitter ingredients which were in his death, and how he should, when on the cross, be forsaken of God, as to his comforting though not his supporting presence, a view of these made his death more formidable than the death of any of his people can be said to be. This leads us to consider the last part of his sufferings.

9. He endured the shameful, painful, and cursed death of the cross. The pains which he endured before, in being buffeted, scourged, and crowned with thorns, were very great; but what he suffered, when nailed to the cross, and hanging on it till he died, was too great for words to express. His body was, as it were, torn asunder by its own weight, and the small and very sensible nerves and fibres of it broken, by their violent extension. The apostle, therefore, speaks of it as the most cruel death, as appears by the emphasis he puts on the words, 'He humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross.'<sup>1</sup> This death was a punishment peculiar to the Romans, while the empire was heathen; but when Christianity obtained in the world, it was forbidden by supreme authority, not only because of the barbarity of it, but out of respect and honour to our Saviour, who suffered it.<sup>2</sup> We have, therefore, only some monuments of antiquity which discover what kind of death it was. There is enough said of it, however, to give us ground to conclude, that it was the most cruel, painful, and formidable death. In undergoing it, the body was fastened to and extended on a tree or stake, driven into the ground for the purpose; the arms extended on a transverse beam; the hands and feet fastened, either by ropes or nails. The former, as some suppose, were often used in fastening persons to the cross; and, if so, the nailing our Saviour to it, was an instance of unusual cruelty. But whether this observation be just, or not, is uncertain.

That our Saviour was nailed to the cross, appears from the mark and print of the nails remaining after his resurrection, which he showed to Thomas for his conviction.<sup>3</sup> His being nailed to the cross greatly tended to increase the pain of his crucifixion. For the weight of the whole body depended on the hands and feet, which, being nervous, are more sensible of pain than many other parts; and, they being wounded with the nails, the pain must have been much more exquisite, and this not only for a little while, but for several hours, all which time he felt the pains of death, and did, as it were, die many deaths in one. This kind of death was so cruel, and so excessively tormenting, that some of the Roman emperors who were of a more merciful disposition, when persons, for the highest crimes, had deserved it, ordered that they should first be slain, and then hanged on a cross, to be exposed to shame, or as a terror to others, without suffering those inexpressible tortures which would attend their dying on it. But our Saviour submitted to all these; and so willing was he to bear them, that when they offered him a mixture of wine and myrrh, as a narcotic or stupifying potion, that he might be less sensible of his pain, which was the only kindness they pretended to show him, and which is, by many, supposed to be customary in such cases, 'he received it not.' This is as if he had said, 'I condemn all your offered assistances to ease my pain, as much as I do your insults and reproaches; all my ease and comfort shall be derived from heaven, and not from you.'

There is another circumstance observed in the death of the cross, namely, that it was shameful. Many think it was styled so, because persons who suffered it were stripped of all their garments. But I am inclined to think that this opinion, though almost universally received, is no better than a vulgar error; for the Romans, who were a civilized nation, would not admit anything to be done which is so contrary to the law of nature as this thing would have been, had it been done.



Besides, there are other circumstances mentioned by the evangelist,<sup>b</sup> which farther argue its improbability. It may be said, indeed, that the soldiers parted our Saviour's garments, and divided them among themselves, after they had cast lots for his upper garment or seamless coat;<sup>c</sup> and it may be supposed that this was done before his crucifixion. But it seems more than probable, that only his upper garment or seamless coat, was taken from him before he was nailed to the cross; that his other garments were not taken away till he was dead; and that, when he was taken down from it, they were exchanged for those linen garments in which he was buried. This seems evident from the words of the evangelist, who intimates that his garments were taken off 'when they had crucified him.' The principal reason, then, why the death of Christ is called shameful, as the apostle styles it when he says, 'He despised the shame,'<sup>d</sup> is that it was a punishment inflicted on none but those who were charged with the vilest crimes, or who were slaves, and hence was called a servile punishment.<sup>e</sup> When any one was made a freeman of Rome, he was exempted from it; so that it was reckoned the highest crime to punish such an one with it, because of the reproach of it.

It is farther observed that the death of the cross was a cursed death. On which account, the apostle speaks of Christ as 'made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.'<sup>f</sup> For understanding this let it be considered, that to be accursed, sometimes signifies to be abandoned of God and man. But far be it from us to assert this concerning the blessed Jesus, 'who had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth.' The meaning of that scripture, as applied to him, is only this, that the death of the cross had a curse annexed to it, and denoted that the person who suffered it died the death of those who were made a public example, as if they had been abandoned of God. Now, though Christ's death had this appearance; yet he was, at the same time, God's beloved Son, in whom he was well-pleased, how much soever he bore the external marks of God's wrath, or abhorrence of our sins, for which he suffered. The scripture which the apostle refers to, is Deut. xxi. 22, 23; whence we may take occasion to observe that, after the Jews had put persons to death for notorious crimes, they sometimes hanged them on a tree, and that such were deemed accursed. The common punishments which were ordained, in scripture, to be inflicted on malefactors, were burning, slaying with the sword, and stoning; and when persons were hanged up before the Lord, that they might be a public spectacle to others, it was done after they were slain. Thus it is said that Joshua smote the five kings, 'and slew them, and then hanged them on five trees until the evening.'<sup>g</sup> Thus, too, David slew the two men who murdered Ishbosheth, and then 'hanged them over the pool in Heshbon.'<sup>h</sup> And its being said that these were 'hanged before the Lord,' was a significant sign of God's righteous judgment inflicted on them for

<sup>b</sup> Mark xv. 40, 41.

<sup>c</sup> John xix. 23.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

<sup>e</sup> It is frequently styled, by the Romans, 'servile supplicium,' [Vid Val. Max. lib. ii. de discipl. milit. § 12.] as being inflicted by them on none but slaves. So one [Vid. Ter. Andr.] represents a master as saying to his servant, 'Quid meritis es?' to which he replies, 'Crucem.' Juv. in Satyr. 6. says, 'Pone crucem servo.' Cicero inveighs with so much earnestness against this severe and cruel punishment, that he signifies how glorious and delightful a thing it would be for him to declaim against it, not only at the expense of his strength, but of his very life: 'Quorum ego de acerbissimâ morte, crudelissimoque, cruciatu dicam, cum eum locum tractare cæpero; et ita dicam, ut si me in eâ querimonîâ, quam sum habiturus de istius crudelitâ, et de rivum Romanorum indignissimâ morte non modo vires, verum etiam vita deficiat, id mihi præclarum et jucundum putem.' Elsewhere he intimates, that it was universally reckoned the highest crime to crucify any one who was free of Rome, in a beautiful climax, or gradation of expression: 'Facinus est, vicini civem Romanum; scelus verberari: prope parricidium necari: Quid dicam in crucem tollere?' [Vid. Orat. in Verr. lib. v.] He says, again, 'Nomen ipsum crucis, absit non modo à corpore civium Romanorum, sed etiam à cogitatione, oculis, auribus.' And he adds concerning it, together with other cruelties which attended it, 'Harum enim omnium rerum non solum eventus, atque perpassio, sed etiam conditio, expectatio, mentio ipsa denique, indigna cive Romano, atque homine libero est. [Vid. Orat. pro C. Rabir.] As to the cruelty of this death, it was so great that the greatest tortures which are expressed by the word 'Cruciatus,' are plainly derived from Crux; and some of the Roman emperors, who were of a more merciful disposition than others, considering the inhumanity of this kind of death when they exposed some persons for their crimes to public shame upon the cross, ordered them first to be put to death by the sword.

<sup>f</sup> Gal. iii. 13.

<sup>g</sup> Josh. x. 26.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. iv. 12.

their crimes ; on which account they were said to be cursed. But our Saviour was not liable to the curse of God, as one who had committed any crime which deserved it. The curse, as regarded him, had respect to the kind of death which he endured for our sins ; who, in consequence of them, were exposed to the curse, or condemning sentence of the law.

*Christ's Humiliation after his Death.*

We are now to consider Christ's humiliation after his death. Though the greatest part of his humiliation was finished when he yielded up the ghost ; yet his state of humiliation was not fully ended till he rose from the dead. It is accordingly observed, in the latter of the Answers we are now explaining, that 'he was buried, and continued under the power of death till the third day ;' which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, 'He descended into hell.' The words in question are contained in that Creed, which is commonly attributed to the Apostles.

1. Christ was buried. Before his death, while he hanged on the cross, he had, as was formerly observed, the visible mark of the curse of God upon him, without any desert of his own ; and this he was delivered from, when he was taken down from the cross. It was a custom among the Romans to suffer the bodies of those who were crucified to hang on the cross till they were devoured by wild beasts or fowls of the air, or till they were turned to corruption, unless, as an act of favour, they were given to their relations to be buried. But, in this instance, we may observe that Christ's implacable enemies desired that his body might be taken down soon after he was dead ; not out of respect to him, but for fear the land should be defiled. For God had ordained in the law that, 'if a person were hanged on a tree, his body should not remain all night upon it, but must be buried, lest the land should be defiled.'<sup>i</sup> They were the more importunate, too, that he should be taken down, because of the sanctity of the approaching day.<sup>k</sup> They petitioned Pilate for it with one view ; and Joseph of Arimathea did so<sup>l</sup> with another. He begged the body that he might bury it. Here we may observe that, after the Jews had done their worst against him, and he was taken from the cross, there was a becoming honour and respect showed to his sacred body. Herein that scripture was fulfilled, 'He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich, in his death.'<sup>m</sup> These words, indeed, seem to have some difficulty in them, as they are thus translated ; for though he was crucified with the wicked, it can hardly be said that he made his grave with them. I would choose therefore to render them, as some expositors do,<sup>n</sup> 'His grave was appointed,' namely, by his persecutors, to have been with the wicked ; that is, they designed to have thrown him into the common grave of malefactors, who had no marks of respect shown them. But it was otherwise with Christ ; for 'he made his grave with the rich,' that is, he was buried in the tomb of Joseph, a rich and honourable counsellor, in which he himself designed to lie, and which he had hewn out of the rock for that purpose. This honour, as the prophet observes, was conferred on our Saviour, 'because he had done no violence ; neither was deceit found in his mouth.'

There were several reasons why God ordained that he should be buried, and that in such a way and place as he was. His burial was a convincing proof to the world that he was really dead. So much depended upon his death, that it was thought necessary that there should be an abundant evidence of it. It is, indeed, expressly said that 'he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.'<sup>o</sup> His enemies, too, were convinced of the fact, and hence thought it needless to break his legs, as they did those of the thieves who suffered with him ; providence ordering this, that 'that scripture should be fulfilled' which fore-signified that 'a bone of him should not be broken.' Besides, that there might be a farther proof of his being really dead, it is said that, even when they knew it, 'they pierced his side ;' an action which, of itself, would have killed him, had he not been dead. This they did, that they might be sure he was dead, before they took him down from the

<sup>i</sup> Deut. xxi. 22, 23.  
<sup>n</sup> See Lowth in loc.

<sup>k</sup> John xix. 31.  
<sup>o</sup> John xix. 30.

<sup>l</sup> Ver. 38.

<sup>m</sup> Isa. liii. 9



cross.<sup>p</sup> It is farther observed that Pilate, his unjust judge, was resolved to be satisfied that he was really dead, before he gave orders for his being taken down from the cross. Accordingly it is said, 'Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.'<sup>q</sup> It may be, the reason why they were so inquisitive to know whether he were really dead or not, was that he seemed to die in his full strength. For there is something remarkable in the expression which the evangelist uses, 'Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.'<sup>r</sup> By this it appears that his spirits were not so much exhausted, but that he might, according to the course of nature, have lived longer; but he seemed by an act of his own will to surrender his soul to God. This was so remarkable an occurrence that it was not merely by accident that it was mentioned by the evangelist. Indeed, it was the means of the centurion's conviction that 'he was the Son of God.'<sup>s</sup> Again, providence ordered that he should be buried by persons of reputation and honour, that so the world might know that, how much soever the rude multitude despised him, persons of figure and character in the world paid a due respect to him.<sup>t</sup> It was farther ordained that he should be buried in a new tomb, wherein never man was laid, that so his resurrection might be more fully demonstrated, that none might pretend that another was raised instead of him, since no other was buried in this grave. The fine linen in which his body was wrapped, and the sweet spices or perfumed ointment with which it was embalmed, not only were agreeable to the method of sepulture practised by the Jews, but were also a public testimony of that respect which his friends bore to him, to whom his memory was precious. Hence Nicodemus, who formerly was afraid to come publicly to him, or who, as is said, at the first came to Jesus by night, 'brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes; and they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.'<sup>u</sup>

2. As Christ died, and was buried; so he continued under the power of death till the third day. This the apostle calls 'Death's having dominion over him;'<sup>x</sup> and it must be reckoned a part of his humiliation as truly as the act of dying. For though his soul enjoyed the bliss and happiness of heaven immediately after his death, as he tells the penitent thief that 'that day he should be with him in paradise;'<sup>y</sup> yet, as it was, when separate, in a state of imperfection, and had a natural desire and hope of reunion with the body, there were some degrees of perfect blessedness of which it was not then possessed. Moreover, so long as he continued under the power of death, he was not fully discharged by the justice of God. The work of satisfaction was not completed till he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and to have fully conquered death and hell by his resurrection from the dead. His continuing under the power of death till the third day, therefore, was a part of his humiliation. Besides, his body, while remaining a prisoner in the grave, could not actively bring that glory to God which it did before, or would do after its resurrection; and it was at that time incapable of the heavenly blessedness, and, in particular, of its being so glorious a body as now it is.

3. As all these things attend the state of separate souls, or the unseen state into which Christ is said to have gone immediately after his death, some, as is observed in this Answer, call his enduring them, his 'descent into hell.' This is what we are next to consider. But as it is largely and judiciously handled by several writers,<sup>z</sup> I shall insist on it with brevity. We shall first consider the subject as founded on scripture, as the judicious Calvin does,<sup>a</sup> without regard had to its being inserted in any Creed of human composition. It is said, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.'<sup>b</sup> Here Christ's soul being in hell, seems, as the author now mentioned observes, to be put before his death. He accordingly supposes that the apostle hereby intends the sufferings which our Saviour endured in his soul; which were not, in all respects, unlike the

p John xix. 33, 34.

q Mark xv. 44.

r Ver. 37.

s Ver. 39.

t John xix. 38, 39.

u Chap. xix. 39, 40.

x Rom. vi. 9.

y Luke xxiii. 43.

z Vid. Wits. in Symbol. Exercitat. 18, and Pearson on the Creed, Artic. 5. and Parker de defensu Christi ad inferos.

a Vid. Institut. lib. ii. cap. 16. § 10.

b Acts ii. 27.

punishment due to sin in hell. In this opinion he is followed by several modern writers. The principal reason which they assign for it, is that, as our Surety, he endured all the essential parts of that punishment which our sins had deserved; and they hence suppose that he endured an afflictive sensation of the wrath of God, which bore some resemblance to that which is endured in hell. But, though I would not extenuate Christ's sufferings, especially in that part of them which was most formidable to him, which was the cup that he desired, if it were possible, might pass from him; and though we cannot suppose that any thing less than a view which he had of the wrath of God, due to our sins, would fill him with that horror and amazement which he expressed; yet we ought carefully to distinguish between this part of his sufferings, and the punishment of sin in hell, inasmuch as he was exempted, as a judicious writer observes,<sup>c</sup> from the sting of conscience, and a constant sense of the everlasting displeasure of God, together with despair of any better condition, or the least relaxation. Besides, it is expressly said, in this scripture, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul;' which shows that though he might be destitute of the comfortable sense of God's presence, and had occasion to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and though the effects of God's wrath which he bore, might fill him with the greatest uneasiness, from the afflictive view which he had of it in his soul, yet he was not destitute of the supporting presence of God, nor separate from his love, which always redounded to his person. While, however, the sense of this text must be thus qualified, if we suppose that it denotes Christ's sufferings in his soul before his death; it does not sufficiently appear that the apostle speaks of his sufferings antecedent to it. What the apostle says, is brought in as an argument, to prove that Christ should be raised from the dead. Accordingly, his 'flesh' is said to 'rest in hope.'

We shall proceed, therefore, to consider Christ's descent into hell, as stated in one of the articles of the Creed, which is commonly attributed to the apostles. This is particularly referred to, in the Answer under our present consideration; where it is noticed after the mention of his death. Here something might have been premised concerning that Creed in general, and the reason of inserting this article in it. But this having been insisted on with great judgment by others,<sup>d</sup> all that I shall add is, that, notwithstanding what we meet with in some fabulous and spurious writings, this Creed was not compiled by the apostles, how consonant soever it be to the doctrines laid down by them. We have no account given of it by any ancient writers before the fourth century, so that, it is of later date than either the Nicene or the Athanasian Creed; the former of which was composed about the year of our Lord 325, the latter not long after it. In the Nicene Creed, there is no mention of Christ's descent into hell. The Athanasian Creed, indeed, notices it, but makes no mention of his being buried. The words are these: 'He descended into hell, and the third day he arose from the dead.' Some have hence concluded, that nothing is intended but his being buried, or continuing in the state of the dead till his resurrection. Some think, indeed, that there was a marginal note in some copies of this creed, to explain what is meant by his descending into hell, namely, that he was buried; which the compilers of the Apostles' Creed afterwards thought to be a part of the Creed itself, and therefore added, 'He died, was buried, and descended into hell.' But, passing by this critical remark, concerning the reason of the insertion of this clause, we shall proceed to consider how it is explained by various writers, who treat on the subject.

The Papists and Lutherans assert that our Saviour descended locally into hell after his death, not to suffer any of the torments which are endured there, but to show himself as a conqueror over those who are detained in it, and triumph over them. As to the Papists, they suppose that he went also into a place which they describe<sup>e</sup> as a prison, where the souls of the Old Testament saints were detained, as being incapable of entering into heaven, inasmuch as they had not a sufficient discovery of Christ and the gospel made to them while they were on earth, and therefore were detained in this prison, which we may call a fictitious place. The

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Pearson on the Creed, Artic. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Vid. History of the Apostles' Creed.

<sup>e</sup> This they call Limbus Patrum.



Papists represent it as being between heaven and hell. It is not, indeed, according to them, a place of torment; but they suppose it was such that its inmates were destitute of the heavenly blessedness. They add, that immediately after Christ appeared among them, and manifested himself to them, they believed. In this sense they understand the scripture where it is said, that 'the gospel was preached to them that are dead.'<sup>f</sup> They say farther, that, after he had preached to them, he carried them with him into heaven. This opinion of Christ's descending locally into hell, is very absurd, and contrary to scripture. It is contrary, in particular, to what he says to the penitent thief upon the cross, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise';<sup>g</sup> by which, doubtless, he means heaven, which is called Paradise in other scriptures.<sup>h</sup> The method which the Papists take to evade the force of the argument founded on this text, is to pretend that our Saviour speaks of the penitent being with him in heaven, as he is there in his divine nature. Or, as this appears to be so great a strain on the sense of the text that very few will much regard it, they have another evasion, which is as little to the purpose, namely, to pretend that there ought to be a stop put after the words 'to-day.' According to this gloss, the meaning is, 'Now, at this time, I say unto thee, that thou shalt be with me in paradise, or heaven, when I ascend into it, after I have descended into hell, and that other place which I must go to, before I come to heaven.' But this sense of the text is so evasive, that none who read the scripture impartially, can suppose that it is just. Nothing farther, therefore, needs be said respecting it. That Christ immediately went into heaven, as to his soul, when he died upon the cross, appears from his last words, 'Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit; which having said, he gave up the ghost.'<sup>i</sup> This giving of himself up to God, implies a desire that God would receive his spirit; even as Stephen said, with his dying breath, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'<sup>k</sup> Christ, in effect, desires that God would receive his spirit; and can we suppose this prayer to have been unanswered, or that he was not immediately received into heaven? We might farther have shown how little ground they have to conclude that Christ went to preach the gospel to those who, by reason of the darkness of the Old Testament dispensation, were detained in prison, as being unfit for the heavenly state. But as the falseness of the supposition has been considered elsewhere,<sup>l</sup> we pass it over at present. As for the scripture which they bring in its defence, that Christ 'went and preached to the spirits in prison,'<sup>m</sup> it is plain, from the context, that the apostle means nothing but Christ's sending Noah to preach to the old world, 'who were disobedient,' and, for being so, were sent into the prison of hell, 'after the long-suffering of God had waited on them, while the ark was building.' [See Note 3 U, p. 606.] How easy a matter is it for those who regard not the analogy of faith, or the context of those scriptures which they bring in defence of their wild absurdities, to pretend to prove any thing from scripture! As to what they say concerning Christ's descending into hell, to triumph over the devils and others, who were there plunged into that abyss of misery, the conjecture has no foundation in scripture. We read, indeed, of his 'spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them;' but he did so, 'in his cross,' not in hell.<sup>n</sup> We read, too, of his 'destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,'<sup>o</sup> but it was not by going in his own Person into that place where he is detained in chains of darkness; it was not by any thing done by him after his death, but it was, as the apostle expressly states, 'by death;' for by his death he purchased that victory which he obtained over him on the cross, which was the seat of his triumph. There is therefore no foundation to assert his local descent into hell.

The most probable opinion concerning Christ's descend into hell, and one which I cannot but acquiesce in, is what is observed in this Answer, implying his continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day. The word 'hell,' indeed, in our English tongue, generally, if not always, signifies that place of torment to which they are adjudged who are for ever excluded from the divine favour. Thus it is said concerning the rich man in the parable, that 'in hell

f 1 Pet. iv. 6.

g Luke xxiii. 43.

h 2 Cor. xii. 2. compared with 4. and Rev. ii. 7.

i Luke xxiii. 46.

k Acts vii. 59.

l See Sect. 'Whether the church under the Old

Testament, &amp;c.' under Quest. iii.

m 1 Pet. iii. 19.

n Col. ii. 15.

o Heb. ii. 14.

he lift up his eyes, being in torments.<sup>p</sup> But the Hebrew and Greek words<sup>q</sup> which we often translate 'hell,' have not only that but another sense affixed to them; for they sometimes signify 'the grave.' So our translators frequently render the words. Thus Jacob speaks of 'bringing down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave;'<sup>r</sup> and elsewhere it is said, 'The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.'<sup>s</sup> The Hebrew and Greek words are understood also in the sense of the state of the dead. Thus Jacob, when he thought that his son Joseph was torn in pieces, without being laid in the grave, says, 'I will go down into the grave unto my son.'<sup>t</sup> There are many other places in which the Hebrew word is so rendered; and as to the Greek word, according to its proper derivation and signification, it denotes the state of the dead, or the unseen state. Thus our Saviour, after death, continued in the state of the dead, his soul being separate from his body till the third day, when his state of humiliation was finished.

p Luke xvi. 23. q שואל and 'Αδης. r Gen. xlii. 38. s 1 Sam. ii. 6. t Gen. xxxvii. 35.

[NOTE 3 U. *The Spirits in Prison.*—'It is plain from the context,' as Dr. Ridgeley remarks, 'that the apostle means nothing but Christ's sending Noah to preach to the old world;' but it is not equally plain that, by 'the spirits in prison,' he means the souls of the antediluvians 'sent into hell.' Christ went 'by the Spirit,'—not personally, but by another; and he 'preached' to the old world by Noah, who was 'a preacher of righteousness,' (2 Pet. ii. 5.) just as 'he came and preached peace' to the Ephesians (Eph. ii. 17.) by Paul, who was the apostle of the Gentiles. The time when he did so was 'the days of Noah,' 'while the ark was a-preparing.' Of 'the spirits' or 'souls' to whom he preached, 'a few,' or the eight members of Noah's family, were 'saved by water' or 'in the ark.' The parties in prison were 'the disobedient,' the objects of the present 'long suffering of God:' they were not 'spirits' merely, but persons or living men; for souls is, in Hebrew phraseology, the current historical name for human beings as distinguished from the inferior animals. See inter alia, Gen. ii. 7; xii. 5; xiv. 21; xvi. 15, 18, 22, 25, 26, 27; Exod. i. 5. 'The prison' in which the persons were, was the doomed world, converted, by the divine threatening or premonition of the coming deluge, into a vast place of custody from which there was no escape. Either the divine threatening was an insurmountable barrier which walled the antediluvians round, and shut them inevitably up to the approaching judgment; or it stood over them as 'a watch,' and held them 'in duranee' or 'in keeping' as criminals, to await the infliction upon them of their merited retribution. Εν φυλακη may have the sense of either 'in prison' or 'in keeping,' 'in duranee,' 'under guard;' (See Matt. xiv. 3, 10; Luke ii. 18; Acts xii. 10.) and, in either sense, it figuratively describes the antediluvians, while the objects of God's long-suffering, and the hearers of Christ's preaching by the Spirit in the person of Noah, as oblivious to the general deluge which had been threatened as a punishment for their crimes.—Ed.]

## CHRIST'S EXALTATION IN HIS RESURRECTION.

QUESTION LI. *What was the estate of Christ's exaltation?*

ANSWER. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.

QUESTION LII. *How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?*

ANSWER. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, of which was it not possible for him to be held, and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof, but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life, really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day, by his own power: whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be Lord of quick and dead; all which he did as a public Person, the Head of his church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

THE former of these Answers containing only a general account of what is particularly insisted on in some following Answers, we pass it over, and proceed to consider Christ as exalted in his resurrection.

### *The Incorruption of Christ's Body.*

1. We observe, then, that Christ did not see corruption in death. Corruption, according to our common acceptation of the word, imports two things. The first is the dissolution of the frame of nature, or the separation of soul and body. In



this sense every one who dies sees corruption ; for death is the dissolution or separation of the two constituent parts of man. Accordingly, the apostle calls it ' the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle.'<sup>u</sup> Now, when our Saviour is said not to have seen corruption, it is not to be understood in this sense, because he really died. But corruption consists principally in the body's being putrified, or turned into dust. In this sense it is said, ' Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.'<sup>x</sup> These words are explained in a following verse, in which it is said that ' his flesh did not see corruption ;'<sup>y</sup> that is, he did not continue long enough in the state of the dead for his body to be corrupted, which it would have been, without a continued miracle, had it lain many days in the grave. It may be objected, that to lie two or three days in the grave is sufficient to contract some degree of corruption ; so that Christ's body could not, in all respects, be free from corruption. But there was a peculiar hand of providence, in keeping it from being corrupted, during the short space of time in which it continued in the state of the dead ; which was an indication of the great regard which God had to him, his sufferings being now at an end. But there may be another reason assigned. As the filth of sin is sometimes, to beget in us a detestation of it, illustrated by things putrified and corrupted ; so God would not suffer the body of Christ to be corrupted. As, moreover, his soul had not the least taint of moral corruption in life, it was not expedient that his body should have the least mark or emblem of it in death. Besides, it was necessary that his body should not see corruption, by being turned into dust as the bodies of all men will be, in order that we might have evident proof that the same body which died was raised again from the dead. But this will be farther insisted on, under a following Head, when we consider the reason why he rose again so soon as the third day.

2. It was not possible for our Saviour to be held any longer under the power of death than till the third day. This statement is founded on Acts ii. 24. For understanding it, let us consider that, had he continued always under the power of death, it would have argued the insufficiency of his satisfaction ; so that his obedience in life, and his sufferings in death, could not have attained the end designed ; and consequently the infinite worth and value of them would, in effect, have been denied. But the justice of God being fully satisfied, it could not refuse to release him out of prison, that is, to raise him from the dead. Again, it was not possible that he should be held any longer under the power of death than till the third day, because the purpose and promise of God must have their accomplishment. Indeed, he was given to understand, before he suffered, that his body should be detained no longer in the grave. Accordingly, he intimates to his followers, ' Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'<sup>z</sup> This event, therefore, was proposed as a sign ; and an appeal is made to it for the confirmation of his mission and doctrine. It was hence impossible that he should be held any longer in the grave.

### *The Reality of Christ's Resurrection.*

We are to prove that Christ actually rose again from the dead. The two main proofs, necessary to support our faith in the fact are, a sufficient testimony given of it by creatures, and a farther confirmation of it by miracles, which are a divine testimony. Both these we have. It may be observed, too, that, as appears by daily experience, the great ends of his death and resurrection are fully obtained ; and that their being so affords us unquestionable matter of conviction.

1. As to a sufficient testimony given by creatures, Christ's resurrection was attested by sufficient, undeniable evidence. Two angels were sent from heaven as the first witnesses of it. They are described as being ' in shining garments, who said, Why seek ye the living among the dead ? he is not here, but is risen.'<sup>a</sup> They are called, indeed, ' two men,' because they appeared in human form ; but another evangelist calls them ' two angels.'<sup>b</sup> Again, the resurrection of Christ was attested by several men and women who were his familiar friends and followers before his death, and saw and conversed with him after his resurrection, and there-

<sup>u</sup> 2 Cor. v. 1.  
<sup>z</sup> John ii. 19.

<sup>x</sup> Acts ii. 27.  
<sup>a</sup> Luke xxiv. 4—6.

<sup>y</sup> Ver. 31.  
<sup>b</sup> John xx. 12.

fore had sufficient proof that it was he who suffered that was raised from the dead. And, lest the testimony of his apostles should not be reckoned sufficient, though there were enough of them to attest the matter, he was afterwards seen by a greater number, namely, 'above five hundred brethren at once.'<sup>c</sup> Now, surely, all these could not be deceived, in a matter of which it was necessary for themselves, as well as others, that they should have the fullest conviction.

That it was morally impossible that his disciples, in particular, should be imposed on, will appear, if we consider that they were his intimate associates. It was for this reason, among others, that providence ordered that he should appear to them, and converse mostly with them. Had he appeared to others who never knew him before, and told them that he was risen from the dead, though they could not question his being alive whilst they conversed with him, yet they might doubt whether he was the same person who died, and so was raised from the dead; and it cannot well be conceived that such could receive a full conviction as to this matter, without a miracle. But, when he appeared to those who were intimately acquainted with him before his death, the conviction is easy and natural. For if his countenance or outward appearance as much resembled what it was before his death, as ours after a fit of sickness does what it was before; then his aspect, or external appearance to them, would afford such matter of conviction as very few pretend to gainsay; especially when we consider that it was but three days since they saw him before he was crucified. It may be objected, however, that his countenance was so altered that it was hard to know him by it; for Mary, one of his intimate acquaintances, when she first saw him, mistook him for 'the gardener;'<sup>d</sup> and it is said that, 'after this, he appeared in another form unto two of them.'<sup>e</sup> But Mary might easily mistake him for another person, through surprise, and not looking steadfastly on him, as not expecting to see him. Hence, her mistake may easily be accounted for, though we suppose his countenance not much to differ from what it was before his death. As to the scripture which speaks of his appearing 'in another form' to two of his disciples, as they walked into the country, the event narrated in it is mentioned, with some particular enlargement, by the evangelist Luke, together with the conversation our Saviour had with them; and it is observed, that 'their eyes were holden, that they should not know him,'<sup>f</sup> and that afterwards 'their eyes were opened, and they knew him.'<sup>g</sup> May we not, from hence, suppose either that there was something preternatural in the change of Christ's countenance, with the design that, at first, they should not know him; or that there was some impression upon the minds of the disciples, which prevented their knowing him? If the former of these be supposed, as according with St. Mark's words relating to his appearing 'in another form,' the miracle will not give us sufficient occasion to conclude that, in other instances of his appearing to his disciples, our Saviour's countenance was so much altered that it was impossible they should know him by it. But if this should not be allowed, or if it should be objected that the most intimate friends may mistake the person whom they see, if there be nothing else to judge by but the likeness of his countenance to what it was before, let us add, that our Saviour not only appeared to his disciples, but conversed with them and brought to their remembrance what had passed between him and them before his death. Thus he says, 'These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you,'<sup>h</sup> &c. Now, when a person not only discovers himself to others, but brings to mind private conversation which had formerly passed between them, at particular times and places, no ground is left to doubt whether he be the same person or not. Hence, Christ's appearing to his intimate, particular friends, and conversing with them, and calling to mind former conversation held with them before his death, proves that he was the same Person who had lived before; so that they might be as sure that he was raised from the dead, as they were that he died.

Those persons who, after his resurrection, were witnesses to the truth of it to the world, were also very worthy of credit. They were of such a temper that they would believe nothing themselves, but upon the fullest evidence. This temper they

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Luke xxiv. 16.

<sup>d</sup> John xx. 14, 15.

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 31.

<sup>e</sup> Mark xvi. 12.

<sup>h</sup> Luke xxiv. 44.



had to such an extreme as is uncommon; providence so ordering it, that we might thence be more sure that we were not imposed on by their report. They were incredulous, even to a fault. For, though they had sufficient intimation given them that our Saviour would rise from the dead at the time he really did, and were also credibly informed by the women who had an account of his resurrection from the angels; yet it is said, 'Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.'<sup>i</sup>—Moreover, though they afterwards received a farther account of the matter from the two disciples who conversed with Christ on the way to Emmaus, and had sufficient ground from them to conclude that he was risen from the dead: yet, when our Saviour, at the same time that they were reporting this matter to them, appeared in the midst of them, 'they were terrified,' as if they had 'seen a spirit.'<sup>k</sup> This circumstance farther discovers how much they were disinclined to believe anything, without greater evidence than what is generally demanded in such cases. Also, the report given by the rest of the disciples to Thomas, concerning his resurrection, and his having appeared to them and conversed with them, which was a sufficient ground to induce any one to believe it, was not, in the least, regarded by him; for he determined that unless 'he saw in his hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, he would not believe;' and in this matter he was afterwards indulged by our Saviour for his conviction. All these things are plain proof that the disciples who were to be witnesses of Christ's resurrection, were not persons of such a temper that they might easily be imposed on; so that their report is the more convincing to us. Moreover, they were men of an unspotted character, unblemished honesty and integrity; which is a very necessary circumstance to be regarded in those who are witnesses to any matters of fact. Their conversation was subject to the inspection of their most inveterate enemies, who, if they could have found anything blameworthy in it, would, doubtless, have alleged it against them, as an expedient to bring their persons and doctrines into disrepute. This would have had a tendency to sap the very foundation of the Christian religion. The Jews also would not have needed to have recourse to persecution, or to call in the aid of the civil magistrate to silence them, if they could have produced any instances of dishonesty, or want of integrity, in their character. The apostle Peter, who was one of the witnesses, appeals to the world, in behalf of himself and the rest of the apostles, when he says, 'We have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.'<sup>l</sup> Indeed, their writings discover not only great integrity, but holiness; and hence the same apostle styles them all 'holy men of God.'<sup>m</sup>—Further, they could not be supposed to have any prospect of advantage by deceiving the world, as to the fact of Christ's resurrection; but, on the other hand, were to look for nothing else but the greatest degree of opposition, from both the Jews and the heathen. The former, who had always been such enemies to their Lord and Master, would, doubtless, be so to them. Besides, they reckoned it their interest to oppose and persecute every one who propagated this doctrine; for they apprehended that, if the world believed it, it would fasten an eternal mark of infamy upon them. They were also apprehensive that it would 'bring on them the guilt of his blood,' that is, the deserved punishment of putting him to death.<sup>n</sup> It may be objected, perhaps, that the apostles might have some view to their own interest, when they first became Christ's disciples, or might expect some secular advantage by being the subjects of his kingdom, as apprehending that it was of a temporal nature. But this they had not any ground to expect from him. Besides, since his crucifixion, all expectations of that kind were at an end; and therefore their reporting that he was risen from the dead, if he had not been so, would have been to invent a lie contrary to their own interest. Moreover, they would by this course not only have imposed on others, but have incurred the divine displeasure, and ruined their own souls; the happiness of which was as much concerned in the truth of their testimony as that of ours. Now, none can suppose that they ever appeared so desperate, as not to regard what became of them either in this or another world.

<sup>i</sup> Luke xxiv. 11.<sup>k</sup> Luke xxiv. 36, 37.<sup>l</sup> 2 Pet. i. 16.<sup>m</sup> Ver. 21.<sup>n</sup> Acts v. 28.

We have thus considered the testimony of those apostles who saw and conversed with Christ after his resurrection, together with their respective character, as witnesses of the fact. To them we have the addition of another witness, namely, the apostle Paul, who saw him, in an extraordinary manner, after his ascension into heaven, and heard his voice, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.'<sup>o</sup> In reference to this, he says concerning himself, 'Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time ;'<sup>p</sup> that is, one who had this qualification for the apostleship, or his being a witness to Christ's resurrection, after that time in which others were qualified to bear their testimony to this truth, that is, after Christ's ascension into heaven. We may observe concerning this witness, that he was well known by all the Jews to have been one of the most inveterate enemies to Christianity in the world. This he frequently afterwards took occasion to mention, that so his testimony might be more regarded. Indeed, nothing short of the fullest evidence as to this matter, could induce him to forego his secular interest, and, in common with the rest of the apostles, to expose himself to the loss of all things in defence of this truth.

Now that we are speaking of the witnesses to Christ's resurrection, and of the apostle Paul as attesting it from his having seen him in a glorified state, we may take notice of one more witness, namely, the blessed martyr Stephen, who declared, in the presence of his enraged enemies, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.'<sup>q</sup> He was, doubtless, one of the holiest and most upright men in his day ; and, when he gave his testimony, it is said in the foregoing words, 'He was full of the Holy Ghost ;' and certainly the Holy Ghost would not suggest a falsity to him. This he spake when ready to expire, and at a time when men are under no temptation to deceive the world ; so that if, at any time they are to be believed, it is then, when they are in the most serious frame, and most thoughtful about that world into which they are immediately passing.

Having thus noticed the testimony of Christ's friends and followers to his resurrection, we might add the testimony of enemies themselves. They were forced to own this truth, though it was so much against their own interest, and though it made their crime, in crucifying him, appear so black and heinous. Thus we may observe that, when Christ was buried, the Jews, from the intimation which they had previously received that he was to rise again after three days, desired Pilate that his sepulchre should be made sure till that time. This was accordingly done. A stone was rolled to the mouth of it, and sealed ; and a watch was appointed to guard it. The men of the watch, too, were Jews ; for Pilate says, 'Ye have a watch : go your way, make it as sure as ye can.'<sup>r</sup> He did not order Christ's friends and followers to watch the sepulchre, but his enemies. It is observed also concerning them, that, when the stone was rolled from the door of the sepulchre by the ministry of an angel, 'the keepers,' or the watch which Pilate had set, 'did shake, and became as dead men,'<sup>s</sup> or were ready to die with fear. This could not throw them into a sleep ; for fear awakens, rather than stupifies the passions. Accordingly, it is said, 'Some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests the things that were done. And when they were assembled together, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.' But as this would render them liable to the governor's resentment, and some degree of punishment for their not attending their respective post with that watchfulness which was necessary, they add, 'We will persuade him, and secure you.' It is then said, 'They took the money, and did as they were taught ; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.' This is the most stupid and absurd method which could have been taken, to discountenance the doctrine of Christ's resurrection. Indeed, it contains a proof of it. The soldiers, at first, reported matter of fact ; but the evasion of it confutes itself. Must we not suppose that there were a considerable number who watched the sepulchre ? Doubtless,

<sup>o</sup> Acts xxvi. 14—16.  
<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxvii. 65.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 8.  
<sup>s</sup> Chap. xxviii. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Acts vii. 56.



they would take care to have several there present, lest those who might come to steal him away should be too strong for them. Now, if there were several present, could they be all asleep at the same time? Or could the tomb be opened, which they had made stronger than ordinary, and the stone rolled from it, and yet none of them be awakened out of their sleep? Besides, if they were asleep, their evidence that Christ was, at the same time, stolen away by his disciples, is too ridiculous to be regarded by any who consider what sort of evidence deserves to be credited; for how could they know what was done when they were asleep?

2. Having thus spoken of the testimony given to Christ's resurrection, both by angels and by men, we proceed to consider how it was confirmed by miracles, which are no other than a divine testimony. The former sort of evidence, indeed, is sufficient to convince any one who does not give way to the greatest degree of scepticism. But yet we have farther proof of it; for, as the apostle says, 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.'<sup>t</sup> Now, God himself has been pleased to set his seal to this truth, or to confirm it by the extraordinary testimony of miracles, which were wrought by the apostles. This testimony was, in some respect, necessary, that the faith of those who were to be convinced by it might be properly divine, and therefore founded on greater evidence than that of human testimony, how undeniable soever it were. Accordingly it is said, that 'with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.'<sup>u</sup> The Holy Ghost, in particular, by whose immediate efficiency these miracles were wrought, is said to be a witness to the fact. Thus the apostles say, 'We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'<sup>x</sup> The meaning of this is, 'We are speaking and acting by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, confirming to you this great truth.' Indeed, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were an extraordinary means for the conviction of the world concerning this truth. This our Saviour, before his death, gave his followers ground to expect at this time; for he spake 'concerning the Spirit, which was not before given,'<sup>y</sup> that is, not in so great a degree as to enable them to speak with divers tongues, and work various sorts of miracles beyond what they had done before. Accordingly, it is said, 'the Holy Ghost was not yet,' or before this, 'given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' Christ promised them also, immediately before his ascension into heaven, that 'these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'<sup>z</sup> These miracles are called 'signs,' as ordained to signify or give a proof of Christ's resurrection. They are said to be wrought by those who had the faith of miracles, or who believed the doctrine of the resurrection themselves, and thereby induced others to believe it. Moreover, they wrought them 'in his name,' with a design to set forth his glory, which could not have been evinced hereby, had he not been risen from the dead. We may add, that all the gifts and graces of the Spirit which believers are made partakers of, are convincing evidences of the doctrine of the resurrection. But this will be considered under a following Head, when we speak on the latter part of this Answer, respecting the fruits and consequences of Christ's resurrection, which the church in all ages experiences, and whereby the work of grace is begun, carried on, and perfected in them.

### *The Properties of Christ's Risen Body.*

We come now to consider the properties of the body of Christ, as thus raised from the dead. In this Answer, it is said, that the same body was raised again, with all its essential properties, but without mortality and other common infirmities belonging to this life.

1. It was the same body which suffered which was raised from the dead, other wise the raising of it could not be called a resurrection. The apostle Paul, speaking concerning the general resurrection at the last day, compares it to the springing

up of 'seed'<sup>a</sup> sown in the ground, which, though it be very much altered as to its shape and many of its accidental properties, yet is the same in substance which was sown. Accordingly, 'every seed hath its own body.' The matter is the same, though the form is different.

2. When it is said, that the body of Christ had the same essential properties which it had before his death, we are to understand that it was material, and endowed with the same senses it had before, which were exercised in the same manner, though it may be in a greater degree.

3. It is farther observed that it had not the same accidental properties which belonged to it before; for it was without mortality and other infirmities of this life. The apostle says, concerning the resurrection of all believers, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'<sup>b</sup> It is said, in particular, concerning our Saviour, that, 'being raised from the dead, he dieth no more,'<sup>c</sup> that is, he was raised immortal. And as believers, after their resurrection from the dead, shall be delivered from the common infirmities of life—such as hunger, thirst, pain, sickness, and the like—much more may we conclude that our Saviour was so. But how far his human nature was changed, as to all its properties, it is not for us to pretend to determine; nor ought we to be too inquisitive about it. Yet we may conclude that, though it was raised incorruptible and immortal, and exempted from the common infirmities of this life, it was not, while on earth, clothed with that lustre and glory which was put upon it when he ascended into heaven. The reason of this might probably be, that he might converse with men, or that they might be able to bear his presence; which they could not have done had his body been so glorious as it is at present since his ascension into heaven.

#### *The Period between Christ's Death and Resurrection.*

It is farther observed, that Christ was raised from the dead on the third day; that is, he continued in the state of the dead from the evening of the sixth day to the morning of the first, which is the Christian Sabbath. The day on which Christ died is said to have been 'the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.'<sup>d</sup> This another evangelist explains, and says, 'It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.'<sup>e</sup> The reason why the day before the sabbath is so called, is that it was the day in which the Jews prepared every thing that was necessary for the solemnity of the day following, and gave a despatch to their worldly affairs that they might not be embarrassed with them, and, by forethought and meditation on the work of that day, might be better prepared for it. This was on the sixth day of the week; and Christ died in the evening, not long before sunset. It is said, also, that he rose again from the dead 'when the seventh day was past, very early in the morning on the first day of the week.'<sup>f</sup> So that our Saviour continued in the state of the dead a part of the sixth day, the whole of the seventh, and a part of the first day of the week. On this account he is said to have 'risen again on the third day,'<sup>g</sup> that is, the third day, inclusive of the day of his death and that of his resurrection. The learned Bishop Pearson, in his marginal notes on the fifth article of the Creed, illustrates it by a tertian, or third day ague, which is so called though there is but one day's intermission between the paroxysms of it; and so the first and third day are both included in the computation. Both he and others who treat on this subject, farther illustrate it by observing that the scripture often speaks of a number of days, inclusive of the first and last; as when it is said, 'When eight days were accomplished, our Saviour was circumcised,'<sup>h</sup> including the days of his birth and circumcision, between which six days intervened.<sup>i</sup> Thus our Saviour continued

a 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38.

b Verses 42–44.

c Rom. vi. 9.

d Luke xxiii. 54.

e Mark xv. 42.

f Chap. xvi. 1, 2.

g 1 Cor. xv. 4.

h Luke ii. 21.

i This observation is of use for explaining the sense of several scriptures which contain a seeming contradiction between them. Thus, in Luke ix. 28, it is said, 'About eight days after these sayings, Jesus took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray;' whereas Mark says, in chap. ix. 2, that this was done 'after six days.' Luke speaks of the eight days, inclusive of the first and last; Mark speaks of eight days, exclusive of them both, which is but six days.



three days in the state of the dead, inclusive of the first and last; or, he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

We shall now consider what reasons may be assigned why providence ordered that Christ should continue three days, and no longer, in the state of the dead.

1. It seems agreeable to the wisdom of God that there should have been some space of time between his death and resurrection, that so there might be a sufficient evidence that he was really dead, since much depends on our belief of that fact. He might have breathed forth his soul into the hands of God one moment, and received it again, as raised from the dead, the next. But God in wisdom ordered it otherwise; for, had Christ expired and risen from the dead in so short a time, it might have been questioned whether he died or not. His having lain in the grave till the third day, however, puts this matter beyond all dispute.

2. It was agreeable to the goodness and care of providence that our Saviour should not continue too long in the state of the dead. Had he continued several years in the grave, there could not have been an appeal to his resurrection during all that space of time to confirm the faith of his people concerning his mission. God would not keep his people too long in suspense whether it was he who was to redeem Israel; nor would he too long delay the pouring forth of his Spirit, or the preaching of the gospel, which were designed to be deferred till Christ's rising from the dead. It seems to have been most convenient, too, that he should soon rise from the dead, that is, on the third day, that the world might have a convincing proof of his resurrection, while his death was fresh in their memories, and the subject of the discourse of all the world. Besides, having been told beforehand of his resurrection, they either were or ought to have been in expectation of this wonderful and glorious event; and consequently it would be an expedient for their greater conviction.

To what has been said concerning Christ's rising again on the third day, so that he lay but one whole day and a part of two days in the grave, it is objected that he is said, to have been 'three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'<sup>k</sup> This, it is said, includes a longer time than what is before mentioned, so that he was crucified on the fifth day of the week, not on the sixth; and it is also contrary to what has been said concerning his being crucified on the preparation before the sabbath. In answer to this objection, we remark that it cannot be denied that, according to the scripture account of time, the measure of a day contains the space of time from one evening to the next, which is twenty-four hours. This we call a natural day, the night being the first part, and not the morning, according to our computation; as we reckon a day to contain the space of time from one morning to the next. The reason why the Jews thus begin their day is, that it is said, 'The evening and the morning were the first day.'<sup>l</sup> The sabbath-day also was reckoned to continue during the space of time from the evening of the sixth day to the evening of the seventh, that is, from sunset to sunset; as it is said 'from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath.'<sup>m</sup> This farther appears, from what is said concerning our Saviour's 'going into Capernaum, and, on the sabbath-day entering into the synagogue and teaching;' for it is said, in a following verse, 'When the sabbath was over, they brought unto him all that were diseased and possessed with devils; and the city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases,'<sup>n</sup> &c. From this it appears that the sabbath was over at sunset that day; for the Jews, thinking it unlawful to heal on the sabbath-day, as they expressly say elsewhere, would not bring those who had diseases to be healed till the sabbath was past.—Again, when a whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours, is spoken of in scripture, it is generally called a day and a night, or an evening and a morning. The Jews have no compound word to express this by, as the Greeks<sup>o</sup> have. Thus it is said, 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.'<sup>p</sup> Here the word which we render 'days,' signifies in the Hebrew, as our marginal reference observes, 'evening morning,' or spaces of time each of which consists of evening and morning. Elsewhere also it is said that Moses was upon the mount 'forty days and forty nights,'<sup>q</sup> that is, forty of those

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xii. 40.    <sup>l</sup> Gen. i. 5.

<sup>o</sup> This they call *νυκθήμερον*.

<sup>m</sup> Lev. xxiii. 32.

<sup>p</sup> Dan. viii. 14.

<sup>n</sup> Mark i. 21. compared with verses 32—34

<sup>q</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 28.

spaces of time which we call days, each of which makes a day and a night. So that a day and a night, according to the Hebrew way of speaking, imports no more than a day. When, therefore, our Saviour is said to have been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, it is an Hebraism, which signifies no more than three days, or three of those spaces of time, each of which, being completed, consists of a day and a night.—Further, it is a very common thing, in scripture, for a part of a day to be put for a day, by a synecdoche of the part for the whole. Hence, a part of that space of time which, when completed, contains day and night, or the space of twenty-four hours, is called a day; so that what is done on the third day, before it is completely ended, is said to take up three days in being done. Thus Esther says, ‘Fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king;’<sup>r</sup> whereas it is said, after this, that ‘on the third day Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house.’<sup>s</sup> She could not be said, therefore, to fast three whole days, but only a part of three; for, before the third day was ended, she went to the king. A part of three days is thus put for three days, or that which is said to be done after three days and three nights, which is all one, may be said to be done on the third day, though the day be not completely ended. Our Saviour may be said, therefore, to have been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, that is, a part of those spaces of time, which, if completed, would have contained three days and three nights.

*Christ raised by his Own Power.*

Christ raised himself from the dead by his own power. Here let it be considered that no power but what is divine can raise the dead; for it is a bringing back of the dissolved frame of nature into the same or a better state than that in which it was before its dissolution, and a remanding of the soul which was in the hand of God to be again united to its body, which none can do but God himself. Accordingly, the apostle mentions it as a branch of the divine glory; and God is represented as ‘he who quickeneth all things.’<sup>t</sup> The body of Christ, therefore, was raised by divine power. Thus the apostle says, ‘This Jesus hath God raised up;’<sup>u</sup> and when he mentions it elsewhere, he makes use of a phrase which is uncommonly emphatic—he wants words to express it, and speaks of ‘the exceeding greatness of his power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.’<sup>x</sup> Again, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are God, as has been observed under a foregoing Answer,<sup>y</sup> it follows that this infinite power belongs equally and alike to them all; so that all these divine Persons may be said to have raised Christ’s body from the dead. That the Father raised him no one denies who speaks of his resurrection; and the apostle expressly says, that ‘he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.’<sup>z</sup> But it is farther said that he raised himself from the dead. Thus he tells the Jews, speaking of the temple of his body, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’<sup>a</sup> That the Holy Ghost raised him, seems to be implied in the expression in which it is said, ‘He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;’<sup>b</sup> that is, the Spirit, by this act of divine power, declared him to have been the Son of God, and to have finished the work he came about. Elsewhere, too, he is said to have been ‘quickeneth by the Spirit.’<sup>c</sup>

Christ, by raising himself by his own power, declared that he was the Son of God; that is, he not only declared that he was a divine Person, which his sonship always implies, but, declared also his mission and authority to act as Mediator, and that he had accomplished the work which he came into the world to perform. As to what he says concerning his raising himself by his own power, ‘Destroy this temple, and after three days I will raise it up,’ the Socinians, apprehending it to be an argument tending to overthrow the scheme they lay down who deny his divinity, are forced to make use of a very sorry evasion. They suppose, that the meaning

<sup>r</sup> Esther iv. 16.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. v. 1.

<sup>t</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 13.

<sup>u</sup> Acts ii. 32

<sup>x</sup> Eph. i. 19. 20. *ὅτι ἐξέταλτο ἡ μεγάλη τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ*, power that is great, even to an hyperbole.

<sup>y</sup> See Quest. ix. xi.

<sup>z</sup> Rom. vi. 4.

<sup>a</sup> John ii. 19.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. i. 4.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18.



of the passage is only this, that the Father put life into his dead body, and united it to the soul, and that he afterwards lifted himself up out of the grave. But this is certainly a very jejune and empty sense of the words. Is it so great a matter for a Person who was quickened by divine power, to lift up himself from the grave in which he lay? In this sense, any one may be said to raise himself up, as well as Christ, or any one might raise the dead, after having been quickened by divine power, by taking him by the hand, and lifting him up from the ground. This shows how much men are sometimes put to it to support a cause which is destitute of solid arguments for its defence. According to this method of reasoning, the whole world may be said to raise themselves at the last day, when God has put life into their dead bodies. But certainly more than this is implied in Christ's raising himself up; for it is opposed to his body being destroyed, or the frame of nature being dissolved in death; so that he certainly intends that he would exert divine power, in raising himself from the dead, and hereby declare himself to be a divine Person, or the Son of God.

### *The Effects of Christ's Resurrection.*

We are next to consider the effects of Christ's resurrection, either as they respect himself, or his people.

1. As to himself, his resurrection was a demonstrative evidence that he had fully satisfied the justice of God, or paid the whole price of redemption, which he had undertaken to do; for hereby he was released out of the prison of the grave, not only by the power, but by the justice of God, and received a full discharge. Accordingly he was, in this respect, justified; and a full proof was given that the work of redemption was brought to perfection. It is also observed, that hereby he conquered death, and 'destroyed him that had the power of it, that is the devil,'<sup>d</sup> and so procured to himself a right to be acknowledged as the 'Lord, both of the dead and living.'<sup>e</sup> This is, in some respects, different from that universal dominion which he had over all things, as God; and which was the result of his being the Creator of all things, and was not purchased or conferred upon him, as the consequence of his performing the work which he came into the world to accomplish. I say, the dominion which we are considering is what belongs to him as Mediator. It includes a peculiar right which he has, as Mediator, to confer on his people those blessings which accompany salvation. It includes, also, his right to give laws to his church, defend them from their spiritual enemies, and bestow all the blessings on them which were promised to them in the covenant of grace. It includes, moreover, his ordering all the affairs of providence to be subservient to these ends. Had he not designed to redeem any of the race of mankind, he would have had a dominion over the world as God, the Judge of all,—a right to condemn and banish his enemies from his presence. But he could not be said to exercise dominion in the way in which it is displayed with respect to the heirs of salvation; for that would have been inconsistent with his divine perfections. Had he not died, and risen again, he would, indeed, have had a right to do what he would with his creatures; but as he could not, without this, have redeemed any, so he could not confer upon a peculiar people, that possession which he is said hereby to have purchased.

2. The effects of Christ's resurrection, which respect his people, consist more especially in four things. First, their justification is owing to it. As we are said sometimes to be justified by his death, or 'by his blood;' so elsewhere we are said to be justified, both by his death and by his resurrection, in different respects. 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again.'<sup>f</sup> By these words, some understand that Christ, by his death, paid the debt which we had contracted to the justice of God; and that, by his resurrection, he received a discharge or acquittance in their behalf for whom he died and rose again; so that when he was discharged, his people might be said to be discharged in him, as their public Head and Representative. This is well expressed in our large English Annota-

<sup>d</sup> Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xiv. 9.

<sup>f</sup> Rom. v. 9.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. viii. 34.

tions.<sup>h</sup> "Our justification, which was begun in his death, was perfected in his resurrection. Christ did meritoriously work our justification and salvation, by his death and passion; but the efficacy and perfection thereof, with respect to us, dependeth on his resurrection. By his death he paid our debt; in his resurrection he received our acquittance. Isa. liii. 8, 'Being taken from prison and from judgment.' When he was discharged, we, in him, and together with him, received our discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins." This is very agreeable to what is said in the present Answer,—that he did all this as a public Person, the Head of his church. Nevertheless, there is another notion of our justification, which consists in our apprehending, receiving, or applying his righteousness by faith, which, as will be observed in its proper place,<sup>i</sup> cannot, from the nature of the thing, be said to be before we believe.—Another effect of Christ's resurrection is our quickening in grace. Thus it is said, 'When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ.'<sup>k</sup> This implies either that, his death being the procuring cause of all inherent grace, begun in regeneration, and carried on in sanctification, his resurrection was the first step taken in order to his applying what he had purchased, and that afterwards we are, as the consequence, raised from the death of sin to a spiritual life of holiness; or else it denotes that communion which believers have with Christ in his resurrection, as well as his death, as he is the Head and they are the members. This agrees with the peculiar mode of speaking often used by the apostle Paul, who, in several places of his epistles, speaks of believers as crucified, dead, and buried, risen, and ascended into heaven, and sitting at God's right hand in heavenly places, in or with Christ.<sup>l</sup>—Again, Christ's resurrection is a means for our support against our enemies, whose utmost rage can extend itself no farther than the grave. They for whom Christ died and rose again shall obtain a glorious resurrection and eternal life with him; and therefore he advises his people 'not to be afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.'<sup>m</sup>—This will farther appear, if we consider another effect of Christ's resurrection, which is, that they are assured by it of their resurrection from the dead at the last day. Christ's resurrection is, as it were, the exemplar and pledge of theirs. As hereby he conquered death in his own person; so he gives them ground to conclude that this 'last enemy,' which stands in the way of their complete blessedness, 'shall be destroyed.'<sup>n</sup> Accordingly, it is said, that he is 'risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.'<sup>o</sup> But this will be farther considered under a following Answer.<sup>p</sup>

## CHRIST'S EXALTATION IN AND AFTER HIS ASCENSION.

### QUESTION LIII. *How was Christ exalted in his ascension?*

ANSWER. Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having, after his resurrection, often appeared unto, and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations; forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our Head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us where himself is, and shall continue, till his second coming at the end of the world.

### QUESTION LIV. *How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?*

ANSWER. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that, as God-man, he is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth, and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies, furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

IN the former of these Answers, we have an account of Christ's ascension into heaven; in the latter, of his sitting at the right hand of God, which contains a circumstance of glory immediately consequent upon his ascension. Accordingly we are led first to consider Christ's ascension into heaven.

<sup>h</sup> See the notes on Rom. iv. 25.

<sup>i</sup> See pages 371, 451. <sup>m</sup> Luke xii. 4.

<sup>j</sup> See vol. ii. Quest. lxx, lxxii.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 26. <sup>o</sup> Ver. 20.

<sup>k</sup> Eph. ii. 5.

<sup>p</sup> See Quest. lxxxvii.



*The Interval between Christ's Resurrection and his Ascension.*

Here we may observe the distance of time between his resurrection and ascension, and what he did during that interval. It is expressly said that 'he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them,' that is, the apostles, 'forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.'<sup>q</sup> Some of the evangelists are more particular on this subject than others. But, if we compare them together, we may observe that our Saviour, during this interval, did not converse freely and familiarly with the world, as he had done before his death, during the exercise of his public ministry. Indeed, we cannot learn, from any account given by the evangelists of this matter, that he appeared so as to make himself known, to any but his friends and followers. He might, it is true, have appeared to the Jews, and, by doing so, have confuted the lie which they so studiously propagated, that his disciples came by night and stole him away, and consequently that he was not risen from the dead. But he thought, as he might well do, that he had given them sufficient proof before his death that he was the Messiah; and, as he designed that his resurrection should be undeniably attested by those who were appointed to be the witnesses of it, it was needless for him to give any farther proof of it. Besides, his enemies being wilfully blind, obstinate, and prejudiced against him, he denied them any farther means of conviction, as a punishment of their unbelief; so that he would not appear to them after his resurrection. Indeed, had he done it, it is probable, considering the malicious obstinacy and rage which appeared in their temper, that they would have persecuted him again, which it was not convenient that he should submit to, his state of humiliation being at an end.

Again, he did not continue all the forty days with his apostles; nor have we ground to conclude that he abode with them in their houses as he did before his death, or that he eat and drank with them, excepting in two or three particular instances, mentioned by the evangelists,<sup>r</sup> the design of which was to prove that, after his resurrection, he had as true a human body, with all the essential properties of it, as he had before his death, and therefore was not, as they supposed him to be when first they saw him, a spectrum. All the account we have of his appearing to his friends and followers, is, that it was only occasionally, at such times as they did not expect to see him. At one time he appeared to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and made himself known to them when they came to their journey's end, and then withdrew himself in an instant. Afterwards, we read of his appearing to the apostles, when they were engaged in social worship, on the day of his resurrection; of his appearing to them again on the first day of the following week;<sup>s</sup> and of his appearing to them another time at the sea of Tiberias.<sup>t</sup> After the account of the last of these appearances, it is expressly said that 'this was now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.'<sup>u</sup> Besides, we read elsewhere of his being 'seen of above five hundred brethren at once';<sup>x</sup> which was probably in Galilee, where his followers generally lived, and where he chiefly exercised his public ministry before his death. This seems to have been appointed as a place of general rendezvous, if we may so express it; for he says, 'After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee';<sup>y</sup> and the angel gives the same intimation, 'Go your way, tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.'<sup>z</sup> Now this intimation being, as is more than probable, transmitted to his followers, five hundred of them waited for him there, and accordingly he appeared to them. All these appearances were only occasional; he principally designing thereby to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, and to give his apostles, in particular, instruction concerning some things which they were unapprized of before.

Having thus spoken concerning the time which Christ continued on earth, dur-

q Acts i. 3. r Luke xxiv. 41—43. John xxi. 13.

t Chap. xxi. 1. u Ver. 14. x 1 Cor. xv. 6.

1. 41

s John xx. 19. compared with ver. 26.

y Mark xiv. 28. z Chap. xvi. 7.

ing which he sometimes appeared to his disciples, we now proceed to consider what he imparted to them during his stay, or at those particular times when he appeared to them. Here we cannot certainly determine anything farther than the account we have in scripture; in which, as was before observed, it is said that 'he spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.' By 'the kingdom of God,' I humbly conceive, is meant either that glorious state and place to which he was to ascend, where they should at last be with him, which was a very useful and entertaining subject on which they could not but be happy in hearing what he said; or it means the gospel-state, which, in the New Testament, is often called 'the kingdom of God,' or 'the kingdom of heaven.' As he designed that they should be his ministers, whom he would employ in preaching the gospel, and thereby promoting the affairs of his kingdom; it was necessary that they should receive instructions concerning the gospel-state. Without this they could do nothing for promoting his interest in the world; or, at least, they must have a particular direction from the Holy Spirit relating to the subject, else they would have no warrant to give instructions to the church concerning the new dispensation. We have no ground to doubt that they had the Spirit's direction in every thing which they laid down for the church, as a rule of faith or practice afterwards. But this they seem not to have had while our Saviour was with them; so that the nature of the gospel-state, as is more than probable, was a part of what he discoursed with them about, as he ordered them to teach those to whom they were sent to 'observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them.'<sup>a</sup>

We have sufficient ground to conclude, that he gave them direction concerning the observance of the first day of the week, as the Christian sabbath. He had told them before his death, that he was 'Lord of the sabbath';<sup>b</sup> and now we may suppose that he more eminently discovered himself to be so, by changing the day from the seventh to the first day of the week. That they had an intimation from him concerning the Christian sabbath seems probable, from the fact that it was observed by them, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension. We read more than once, too, of his giving countenance to their observance of it, by his presence with them. Yet, at this time, the Holy Ghost was not poured forth upon them. Their practice, therefore, seems to have been founded on some intimation given them by our Saviour, during his continuance with them forty days; though perhaps the matter was confirmed to them afterwards, by extraordinary revelation from the Holy Ghost.

It was in this interval, also, that our Saviour gave them a commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and instituted the ordinance of baptism.<sup>c</sup> The commission which he now gave differs very much from that which he had before given to his twelve disciples, when he ordered them 'not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'<sup>d</sup> Now, however, none are excluded; but their commission must be exercised throughout the world, wherever they went. Together with this, too, he promised 'to be with them,' so as to assist and succeed them in their ministry, 'to the end of the world.' Moreover, he enjoined them 'to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high, waiting there for the promise of the Father,' or for their being baptized by the Holy Ghost, which privilege they should soon after receive.<sup>e</sup> This was a very necessary advice which our Saviour gave them; for, though they had a commission to preach the gospel, they wanted those qualifications for it which they were to receive from the Holy Ghost. They were to tarry at Jerusalem, also, after they had received extraordinary gifts from the Holy Ghost, till they had an intimation given in what parts of the world they should begin the exercise of their public ministry.

Again, though it is not particularly mentioned in the evangelical history, yet it is not improbable, that our Saviour spake to his disciples concerning the nature of the gospel-church and its government, how they were to exercise their ministry in it, what doctrines they should preach, what success should attend them, and what

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

<sup>b</sup> Mark ii. 28.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. x. 5 6.

<sup>e</sup> Luke xiv. 49. compared with Acts i. 4, 5.



they should suffer for his sake. Why may we not suppose that he spake of these things to all his apostles, when he condescended to tell Peter, 'by what death he should glorify God?'<sup>f</sup> Their knowledge of many of these things was necessary for the right discharge of their ministry, which they were to begin at Jerusalem, where the first church was to be planted; and it can hardly be supposed that he would only give them a commission to preach the gospel, without some instructions as to how they should execute it. But as this is only a probable argument, let me add that it is certain they afterwards had particular direction as to this matter, from the Holy Ghost, who was given, after Christ's ascension into heaven, to lead them into all truth, or to impart, by them, to the gospel-church, an infallible and standing rule of faith and practice.

### *Christ's Ascension.*

After our Saviour had continued forty days on earth from his resurrection, and, in that time, conversed with his apostles of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, he ascended into heaven, or, as it is expressed in the Answer we are considering, he visibly went up into the highest heavens. There are two phrases, in scripture, whereby this is set forth. It is said, 'he was taken up,' and 'he went up.'<sup>g</sup> This variation of expression is used by the Holy Ghost, as some think, to denote two different respects or circumstances attending his ascension. 'His going up' signifies that he ascended into heaven by his own power, pursuant to the right which he had to that glory; as he says elsewhere, 'Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory?'<sup>h</sup> His being 'taken up' into heaven, signifies the Father's act in exalting him. As he sent him into the world, so he took him out of it into a better, when he had finished his work upon earth. This variety of expression we find used in several other scriptures. Thus it is said, that 'he ascended up on high,'<sup>i</sup> 'entered into heaven,'<sup>k</sup> and so put in his claim to the heavenly glory; and, on the other hand, 'he was received up into heaven,'<sup>l</sup> and consequently his claim to it admitted of. Accordingly, he was 'exalted' to this honour 'by God's right hand,'<sup>m</sup> as what was due to him as the consequence of his sufferings.

That we may more particularly consider what it was for Christ to ascend into heaven, let it be observed that we are not to understand hereby that his divine nature was translated from earth to heaven, or changed the place of its residence; for that is contrary to its omnipresence. Whenever a change of place is ascribed to it, it respects not his essential, but his manifestative presence. Though it was united to the human nature, yet it was not confined to it, or limited by it; and though, in one way, it displayed its glory therein whilst he was on earth, and, in another, when he ascended into heaven, yet, considered as to its essential glory, it fills all places. Hence, it is said, that he was in heaven whilst here on earth.<sup>n</sup>—Again, when we say that Christ ascended into heaven in his human nature, the language is not to be understood in a metaphorical sense, as though it denoted only his being advanced to a more glorious state than he was in before his death; since heaven signifies a glorious place, as well as state. Were it to be understood only in a metaphorical sense, it might, for the same reason, be said that there are no saints or angels locally in heaven: for the metaphor might as well be applied to them as to our Saviour. But this is directly contrary to the known acceptation of the word in scripture. Moreover, that his ascending into heaven denotes a change of place, as well as state, is evident from the fact that, though his state of humiliation was over immediately after his resurrection, yet he says, concerning his human nature, that, during his abode forty days on earth, though raised from the dead, 'I am not yet ascended to my Father.'<sup>o</sup>—His ascension into heaven, then, is to be understood, in the most proper and known sense of the word, inferring a change of place, as well as state, denoting his being carried from this lower to the upper world, in his human nature, and so entering into that glorious place, as well as triumphant state. This is called 'the heaven of heavens;'<sup>p</sup> which gives us

<sup>f</sup> John xxi. 19.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. ix. 24.

<sup>o</sup> John xx. 17.

<sup>g</sup> Acts i. 9, 10.

<sup>l</sup> Mark xvi. 19.

<sup>p</sup> Psal. cxlviii. 4.

<sup>h</sup> Luke xxiv. 26.

<sup>m</sup> Acts ii. 33.

<sup>i</sup> Eph. iv. 8.

<sup>n</sup> See page 164.

ground to conclude, that the word 'heaven' is taken in various senses in scripture. It is sometimes taken for the air ; accordingly the fowls that fly in it, are said to 'fly in the midst of heaven.'<sup>a</sup> Sometimes it is taken for the clouds ; and so we read of 'the rain,'<sup>r</sup> or 'dew of heaven,'<sup>s</sup> as coming down from thence. Sometimes it is taken for the stars ; so we read of 'the stars of heaven.'<sup>t</sup> But, besides all these senses of the word, it is taken for the seat of the blessed, the throne of God, where he manifests himself, in a glorious manner, to his saints and angels. To this place Christ ascended ; and, in reference to his doing so, it is said, not only that he 'went' into heaven, but that 'he was made higher than the heavens,'<sup>u</sup> or, that 'he ascended far above all heavens.'<sup>x</sup> Accordingly it is said, in this Answer, that he went up into the highest heaven.

Now, that Christ ascended into heaven, and that in a visible and glorious manner, is evident from the account we have in scripture of his ascension ; which, together with the circumstances that went immediately before it, is what is next to be considered. We read in scripture that, when the eleven disciples were assembled together, he came with a design to take his leave of them ; and that after he had 'opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures,' and had farther confirmed their faith by applying these to himself, and had concluded all those necessary instructions which he gave them, 'he led them out as far as Bethany,' and then 'lifted up his hands and blessed them, and, while he blessed them, was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.'<sup>y</sup> But, as this relation seems somewhat different from the account given elsewhere of the ascension by the same inspired writer,<sup>z</sup> who observes that, when Christ had ascended into heaven in the sight of his disciples, 'they returned to Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey,' clearly implying that he ascended into heaven from that mountain ; how, it may be asked, could he have ascended thither from Bethany ? It is observed, that Bethany<sup>a</sup> was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and the mount of Olives a sabbath-day's journey ; so that Bethany and the mount of Olives seem to be almost a mile distant from each other. If Christ, then, ascended from one of these places into heaven, how could he be said to ascend from the other ? The answer which may be given to this seeming inconsistency, is that the town of Bethany was situated at the foot of the mount of Olives ; so that the part of the mountain which was nearest to it might have two names, namely Olivet, which was the name of the whole mountain, and Bethany, which denomination it might take from the adjoining village. Or, if this be not sufficient to solve the difficulty, we may remark that when the evangelist says, in one of the places, that our Saviour 'led them out as far as Bethany,' he does not say he was taken up into heaven from thence ; but says only that, after he led them thither, 'he blessed them, and, while he blessed them, he was parted from them.' It is hence probable that, when he was come to Bethany, he gave them an intimation that he should soon be received into heaven ; that, while he was going thence, or going up the mount of Olives, he continued blessing them ; and that, when he was come up to that part of the mount whence he ascended, he 'lifted up his hands,' and conferred his last benediction on them, and then 'was parted from them, and a cloud received him' and conveyed him to heaven. There is therefore no inconsistency between the two scriptures, as to the place whence he ascended. It is farther observed that his ascension was visible. 'They looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up.'<sup>b</sup>

From this account of Christ's ascension into heaven, we may make two or three remarks. As to the place whence he ascended, which was the mount of Olives, it may be observed that it was the same place to which he often retired, when he was at Jerusalem, to converse with God in secret.<sup>c</sup> Here it was that he was in his agony,<sup>d</sup> in which he sweat great drops of blood, when he had a very terrible apprehension of the wrath of God which he was to bear as a punishment due to our sin, which was the most bitter part of his suffering ; and therefore here he chose to begin his triumphs, as from hence he ascended into heaven. Hereby he

q Rev. xix. 17.

u Heb. vii. 26.

a John xi. 18.

r Deut. xi. 11.

x Eph. iv. 10.

b Acts i. 10.

s Gen. xxvii. 28.

y Luke xxiv. 50—53.

c Luke xxii. 39.

t Chap. xxii. 17

z Acts i. 12.

d Verse 44.



seems, as it were, to give an intimation to his people, that they ought to set the glory which they shall be advanced to, against the sufferings of this present life, as a ground of encouragement and support to them. That place which, at one time, discovered nothing but what was matter of distress and anguish of spirit, at another time opened a glorious scene of joy and happiness. This mountain, which before had been a witness to that horror and amazement in which our Saviour was when in the lowest depths of his humbled state, now represents him as entering immediately into his glory. The place in the mountain whence he ascended, is not particularly mentioned, nor is there any mark of sanctity put on it. The Papists, indeed, with a great deal of superstition, pretend to discover the very spot of ground whence our Saviour ascended; and impose on those who will believe them, by showing them the print of his feet, which they suppose he left behind him upon the mountain; in which place they have erected a church, open in the top, to signify his ascension into heaven. But this is little better than a fabulous conjecture. It is an easy matter to find some hollow places in any mountain; but to say that any such small valley was made by our Saviour's feet, as a memorial of his ascending thence, is nothing but an imposition on the credulity of ignorant persons, without scripture warrant.

From what has been said concerning Christ's conversing with his disciples about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, we may observe that the work he was engaged in, just before his ascension into heaven, was of such a nature that it is a very desirable thing for a person, when called out of the world to be found so doing. Our Saviour's whole conversation, while on earth, had, some way or other, a reference to the kingdom of heaven, and had a tendency to bring his people thither; and this was the last subject which he conversed with them about.

What is said concerning his blessing them when he was parted from them, accords with what is mentioned concerning Elijah, whose translation into heaven was a type of Christ's ascension thither, concerning whom it is said that he bade 'Elisha ask what he should do' or desire of God 'for him, before he was taken from him.'<sup>e</sup> As the great design of our Saviour's coming into the world was to be a public blessing to his people; so the last thing he did for them was to bless them. He did this, either as a divine Person, by conferring blessedness upon them; or, as man, by praying for a blessing for them, whereby he gave them a specimen of the work in which he is engaged in heaven, ever living to make intercession for them. It is farther observed, that 'he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.' Sometimes when persons blessed others, they did it by laying their hands upon them. This Jacob did when he blessed the sons of Joseph,<sup>f</sup> as a sign of his faith, which was herein expressed, that blessings should descend from God upon them. When many persons were blessed at the same time, the person blessing, instead of laying on hands, sometimes lifted them up. Thus Aaron is said 'to have lifted up his hands towards the people, and blessed them.'<sup>g</sup> So Christ lifted up his hands when he blessed his disciples, as an external sign of his lifting up his heart to God, while he prayed for the blessings which they stood in need of.

Having thus noticed Christ's ascension to heaven, I cannot wholly pass over one thing more mentioned in this Answer, namely, that he ascended as our Head. The headship of Christ is a circumstance often mentioned by the apostle Paul, who supposes him to stand in this relation to his people in every thing which he did for them as Mediator. As their Head he is considered as a public Person, the Representative of all his elect, who acted in their name, as well as for their interest.

### *The Necessity of Christ's Ascension.*

We are now led to consider that it was necessary that Christ should ascend into heaven after he had finished his work on earth; his ascension being an accomplishment of what was foretold concerning him. The psalmist mentions it in a very beautiful and magnificent way, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.'<sup>h</sup> Elsewhere also it is said, 'Thou hast ascended on high.'<sup>i</sup> This passage the apostle Paul particularly

<sup>e</sup> 2 Kings ii. 9.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. xlviii. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Lev. ix. 22.

<sup>h</sup> Psal. xxiv. 9.

<sup>i</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 18.

applies to his ascension into heaven, as a prediction of the event.<sup>k</sup> Christ's ascension was signified also by that eminent type of it which consisted in the high priest's entering into the holiest of all. This was equivalent to a prediction; and is spoken of by the apostle as shadowing forth the event.<sup>l</sup> Moreover, the ascension was foretold by our Saviour himself, whilst he was on earth, before and after his death. He tells his disciples, 'I go to prepare a place for you,'<sup>m</sup> and, 'I ascend to my Father,'<sup>n</sup> &c.; so that there was really an appeal to his ascension into heaven, as well as to his resurrection, for the proof of his mission, and his relation to God as his Father. It was necessary, therefore, that he should ascend thither. His ascension was necessary also as it was a glory promised him as the consequence of his sufferings. 'It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect, through,' or after, his 'sufferings.'<sup>o</sup> Again, it was necessary that he should ascend *visibly* into heaven, or that his apostles, who were to be witnesses of his ascension as well as of his resurrection, should see him go thither. The fact of the ascension was necessary to be believed, as well as the fact of the resurrection; and whatever they were to give their testimony to, must be the result of the fullest conviction. Hence, that they might convince the world that he was ascended into heaven, they required to be qualified to tell them that they saw him ascend thither. It may be objected that, as they might give their testimony that he rose again from the dead, though they did not see him rise, they might attest the truth of his ascension, though they had not seen him ascend into heaven. Now, it is true that their testimony that he was risen from the dead was sufficient, though they did not see him rise; for they saw him after he was risen, and had undeniable proofs that he was the same Person who suffered. But there is a circumstance attending his ascension into heaven which renders it necessary that they should see him ascend thither, though it was not necessary that they should see him rise from the dead, in order to their giving conviction to the world. He did not design that they should see him, after his ascension, till his second coming to receive them into heaven; and then their testimony will be at an end; so that it was necessary that they should see him ascend. The apostle Paul, it is true, at his conversion, saw him clothed with his heavenly glory in his exalted state; but this was a singular and extraordinary manifestation of himself, which he gave his other disciples no ground to expect. Hence, that they might want no qualification which was necessary in order to the fulfilling of their testimony, he ascended into heaven visibly, in the presence of all his apostles.

### *The Ends of Christ's Ascension.*

There are several great and valuable ends of Christ's ascension, mentioned in this Answer, some of which were glorious to himself, and all of them advantageous to his people.

1. He triumphed over his enemies. The apostle says, 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive.'<sup>p</sup> This is an allusion to the solemn triumphs of princes, after having obtained some remarkable and complete victories. Now the empire of Satan was demolished, and his prisoners ransomed, and delivered from his power. Accordingly, the gospel, which was to be preached throughout the world, was a public 'proclamation of liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound.'<sup>q</sup>

2. Christ ascended into heaven, that he might receive gifts for men. The scripture seems to distinguish between Christ's purchasing and his receiving gifts for men. The former was done by his death; the latter was consequent on his ascension into heaven. There are two expressions used on this subject,—that of the psalmist, 'Thou hast received gifts for men,'<sup>r</sup> and that of the apostle, 'He gave gifts unto men';<sup>s</sup> that is, he received gifts for men, with a design to give them to them. This he did, after his ascension into heaven, when there was a very great effusion of the Spirit on the gospel-church, and when she was furnished with a

<sup>k</sup> Eph. iv. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9, 11, 24.

<sup>m</sup> John xiv. 2.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. xx. 17.

<sup>o</sup> Heb. ii. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Eph. iv. 8.

<sup>q</sup> Isa. lxi. 1. compared with Luke iv. 18.

<sup>r</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 18.

<sup>s</sup> Eph. iv. 8.



variety of ministers, such as 'apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.'<sup>t</sup> This bestowal of gifts is a farther allusion to the custom of princes in their triumphs; on which occasion they extend their royal bounty to their subjects.

3. Christ ascended into heaven 'to prepare a place' for his people, as he told them he would do, before his death.<sup>u</sup> Accordingly he is said to 'have entered there, as the Forerunner';<sup>x</sup> and so he took possession of those heavenly mansions in their name, to which he designs, at last, to bring them.

4. He ascended into heaven, to raise up their affections thither, and to induce them to 'set their affection on things above.'<sup>y</sup> That place is always most dear to us which is our home, our rest, where our best friends reside. Our thoughts are most conversant about it; and we are inclined to desire to be with them there. Hence, Christ's being in heaven, together with all his saints, is a motive to all believers to have their 'conversation in heaven;' which is the character given of them by the apostle.<sup>z</sup>

5. The last thing observed in this Answer is, that Christ designed to continue in heaven till his second coming at the end of the world. It is said, 'Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things.'<sup>a</sup> But at that time, he will come again into this world, not to reside or fix his abode here, but to receive his people into heaven, where they shall be with him to all eternity; as it is said, 'So shall we ever be with the Lord.'<sup>b</sup>

#### *Christ's Session at the Right Hand of God.*

Having thus spoken concerning Christ's exaltation in his ascension into heaven, we proceed to consider him as exalted in sitting at the right hand of God. This is a glory which was conferred upon him after his ascension into heaven. Sitting at the right hand of God is a figurative way of speaking, which the Holy Ghost condescends to make use of. It cannot be understood in any other sense; for God, being a Spirit, is without body, or bodily parts; and, being immense, 'the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him.'<sup>c</sup> Hence, the expression denotes, not the situation of Christ's human nature in some particular part of heaven, but his being advanced to the highest honour there. 'The right hand,' amongst men, is used to signify some peculiar marks of honour conferred on those who are seated there. Thus when Bathsheba went in unto king Solomon, he caused a seat to be set for her, and she sat 'on his right hand.'<sup>d</sup> So when Christ is said 'to sit on the right hand of the throne or the Majesty in the heavens,'<sup>e</sup> the language denotes the highest degree of honour conferred on him, as Mediator.

In particular, Christ's sitting there denotes the glorious rest which he enjoys, after having sustained many labours and afflictions in this world; a sweet repose, and perfect deliverance, from all those things which formerly tended to make him uneasy, while in his way to it. It implies also the honour and supreme authority which he is invested with. Others are represented as servants standing in the presence of God. Thus it is said, 'Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.'<sup>f</sup> But Christ is distinguished from them all by this mark of regal dignity, that he 'sits and rules upon his throne.'<sup>g</sup> The apostle says, concerning him, that, having 'purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;' intimating, that he was 'made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.'<sup>h</sup> This he farther proves when he says, 'To which of the angels said he, at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?'<sup>i</sup>—Again, Christ's sitting at the right hand of God signifies the perpetuity, or eternal duration of his mediatorial glory and authority; for 'to sit,' in scripture, often signifies, to abide. But this was formerly considered, when we spake concerning

t Eph. iv. 11, 12.

z Phil. iii. 20.

d 1 Kings ii. 19.

h Heb. i. 3, 4.

u John xiv. 2.

a Acts iii. 21.

e Heb. viii. 1.

i Ver. 13.

x Heb. vi. 20.

b 1 Thess. iv. 17.

f Dan. vii. 10.

y Col. iii. 2.

c 1 Kings viii. 27.

g Zech. vi. 13.

the eternity of Christ's kingdom.<sup>1</sup> There are other things, mentioned in this Answer, which are the fruits and effects of Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, namely, the exercise of his power over all things, in heaven and earth; and, as the consequence of this, his gathering and defending his church, subduing their enemies, and furnishing his ministers with gifts and graces. But these will be more particularly insisted on, under a following Answer, when we shall be led to speak concerning the special privileges of the visible church.<sup>m</sup> What we are next to consider is, that Christ, as sitting at the right hand of God, makes intercession for his people.

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## THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

### QUESTION LV. *How doth Christ make intercession?*

ANSWER. Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers, answering all accusations against them, procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

THE intercession of Christ, as was observed under a former Answer, is a branch of his priestly office, and is founded on his satisfaction. The reason why it is mentioned in this place, after we have had an account of his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, is, as I conceive, that the apostle lays down these heads in the same order: 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'<sup>n</sup>

### *The Necessity of Christ's Intercession.*

In speaking concerning Christ's intercession, we shall consider first its necessity. Now, this appears from its having been foretold and typified. It was predicted concerning him, that he should 'make intercession for the transgressors';<sup>o</sup> and elsewhere God the Father is represented as saying to him, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'<sup>p</sup> These words, though they have the form of a command, are, doubtless, a prediction relating to this matter; whereby it is intimated, that the glorious success of the gospel, when preached to the world, should not only be the purchase of his death, but the consequence of his intercession. Moreover, what Elihu speaks of an advocate, as pleading the cause of a poor afflicted person, and saying, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom;' and 'He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable to him, and he shall behold his face with joy, for he will render unto man his righteousness';<sup>q</sup> seems to be understood of Christ rather than of any other; for it is most agreeable to the character given him of 'a Messenger with him,' and 'an Interpreter, one among a thousand,' and of his being 'gracious unto him,' when he thus makes intercession for him. Again, when he is represented by the psalmist, as saying concerning his enemies, I will not 'take up their names into my lips,'<sup>r</sup> the language plainly intimates his design to intercede for all others, namely, for his people. That David does not here speak in his own person, but in the Person of Christ, is very evident from the fact that it was his duty, in common with all mankind, to pray for his enemies. He therefore speaks of another sort of intercession, namely, Christ's, which is different from that which one man is obliged to make for another. Accordingly, in some following verses, we have a prediction of his rising from the dead before he saw

1 See under Quest. xlv.

o Isa. liiii. 12.

p Psal. ii. 8.

m See Quest. lxii, lxiii.

q Job xxxiii. 23, 24, 26.

n Rom. viii. 34.

r Psal. xvi. 4.



corruption; a prediction which is particularly applied to him in the New Testament.<sup>s</sup> We may add, that as Christ's intercession was expressly foretold by the prophets; so it was typified by the high priest's entering every year into the holy of holies with blood and incense, to appear before God in behalf of the people, as making intercession for them. This is expressly applied to Christ, as the Anti-type, and to his 'entering into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'<sup>t</sup>

Again, Christ's intercession was necessary on account of the condition of fallen man requiring it. Some have been ready to conclude, that, by reason of that infinite distance which there is between God and man, it was necessary that there should be an Advocate to procure for him a liberty of access to God. But that does not evidently appear. For, as we have no ground to conclude that the holy angels, though infinitely below him, are, by the intervention of an Advocate or Intercessor with him in their behalf, admitted into his presence, or made partakers of the blessings which are the result of being admitted there; so man would not have stood in need of a Mediator or Advocate, to bring him into the presence of God, or plead his cause any more than he would have needed a Redeemer, had he not fallen. His present circumstances, however, require both. It is necessary that Christ should intercede for him, because, being guilty, he is rendered unworthy to come into the presence of God, and is actually excluded from it. The psalmist says, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity.'<sup>u</sup> This punishment is the immediate consequence of guilt, whereby the sinner is exposed to the curse of God, whose holiness obliges him to order such to depart from him. Moreover, there is a servile fear, or dread of him as a consuming fire, which attends a sense of guilt. On this account, the sinner desires rather to fly from, than to have access to him; so that he needs an Intercessor to procure for him this privilege of access. Besides, there are many accusations brought in against him, as a ground and reason why he should be excluded from the divine favour, and not have any saving blessings applied to him. All these accusations must be answered; and on this account there is need of an Advocate to plead his cause.

#### *Christ the only Competent Intercessor.*

None but Christ, our great Mediator and Advocate, is fit to manage this important work for us. We cannot plead our own cause; for guilt stops our mouths, as well as renders us unworthy of any blessing from God. It is certain, also, that no mere creature can do it for us. For none can speak any thing in their favour who are under a sentence of condemnation, unless an expedient were found out to bring them into a state of reconciliation with God; for that would tend to the dishonour of his justice. Nor can any plead for a blessing to be bestowed on them, but he who was able to make atonement for them; which no mere creature could do, since the greatest price which he can give is far from being of infinite value. But such a price as this Christ has laid down, as was formerly shown, in speaking concerning his priestly office; and therefore he alone is fit to be an Advocate or Intercessor for his people.

#### *The Reality of Christ's Intercession.*

We are now led to consider that Christ is his people's Advocate, or makes intercession for them. This appears from several scriptures. Thus it is said, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them;'<sup>x</sup> and, 'We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'<sup>y</sup>

1. Christ is represented as making intercession for his people before his incarna-

<sup>s</sup> Acts ii. 31.

<sup>x</sup> Heb. vii. 25.

1.

<sup>t</sup> Heb. ix. 7, 9. compared with verses 11, 12, 24.

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 1.

4 K

<sup>u</sup> Psal. v. 4, 5.

tion. Thus it is said,<sup>z</sup> 'The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.'<sup>a</sup>

2. After his incarnation, he interceded for his people in his human nature; and while he was on earth, he did it agreeably to that state in which he then was; though the efficacy of his intercession depended on his completing the work of our redemption, which was not done before he arose from the dead. On this account, there was something proleptical in his intercession then, as well as when he is represented as making intercession before his incarnation.

3. As the price of redemption was not fully paid till his state of humiliation was at an end, on which account he is generally styled a consummate Mediator from the time when he was made 'perfect through sufferings';<sup>b</sup> so he was, after that, a complete Advocate or Intercessor for his people. Accordingly, he is said, in a way of eminence, 'to make intercession for them,' after his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, in his glorified state. There he manages their cause with an advantageous plea, which he could not use while on earth; for then he had not accomplished his work of redemption, and therefore could plead the promise made to him only on condition of his bringing that work to perfection which then was only begun. Moreover, whatever act of worship he then performed, was agreeable to that state of humiliation in which he was; but now that he is in heaven, and his work of redemption finished, he pleads his absolute and actual right to receive those blessings for his people, and apply them to them, which God had promised in the covenant of redemption. This, too, he does with those circumstances of glory which are agreeable to his exalted state, as sitting at God's right hand, and as having such visible marks of the divine favour that nothing can be denied him which he asks for. It is true, while he was on earth, he said, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me,'<sup>c</sup> &c.; and this he might well say, inasmuch as there was sufficient security or ground to conclude, that he could not fail in the work which he was engaged in, so as to leave it incomplete. How much more, then, may he say this, when he is in his exalted state, and pleads as one who has brought to perfection the work which he came into the world to perform? Let me add, that he will intercede for his people for ever; as he shall always continue in this exalted state. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. If Christ's presence in heaven be a full and comprehensive plea for all the blessings we enjoy or hope for; then so long as he shall abide there, he will intercede for us, and that will be for ever. That this may farther appear, let it be considered that the sacrifice which he offered for his people while on earth, procured for them not only the blessings they enjoy in this world, but those which they shall be possessed of in heaven. And as his being received into heaven was a convincing evidence that what he did and suffered, before he went thither, was accepted, and deemed effectual to answer all its valuable ends; so his continuance there will remain a standing and eternal evidence of its acceptance and efficiency. Now, this is the nature of a plea, and it respects not only the blessings which they now enjoy, but all they hope for, so that their eternal happiness is founded on it. This is what the apostle principally intends when he says, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'<sup>d</sup>

#### *The Difference between Christ's Intercession and our Prayers.*

'We shall now consider the difference between Christ's intercession for us with the Father, and our praying for ourselves or others, and that when we address ourselves either to men or God.

1. When we intercede with men to obtain some favour from them, we hope,

<sup>z</sup> Zech. iii. 2.

a Christ did not intercede for his church before his incarnation formally, inasmuch as it is inconsistent with his divine nature to pray, prayer being an act of worship; but virtually, by which we are to understand that all the blessings which the church enjoyed were founded on the sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, he designed to offer. This is, by a prolepsis, represented as if it had been then done; in the same sense as he is elsewhere said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'

<sup>b</sup> Heb. ii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> John xi. 41, 42.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. vii. 25.



either by our arguments or our importunity, or, at least, by our interest in them, or some obligations which we have laid them under, to persuade them to alter their minds; because we are treating with mutable creatures. But this is by no means to be applied to Christ's intercession, in which he deals with an unchangeable God, who has, in various instances, declared his love to and willingness to save all those whose salvation he intercedes for. In this sense we are to understand our Saviour's words, 'I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you.'<sup>e</sup> Moreover, when we intercede with men for any favour, we do not usually present any price paid by us for the benefit we intercede for. But Christ, in interceding for his people, presents the merit of his obedience and sacrifice, which is the only thing that renders his intercession effectual.

2. When we pray to God for ourselves or others, our doing so differs from Christ's intercession; for we present ourselves and our petitions to him in the name of Christ, and hope for a gracious answer in virtue of his mediation and righteousness; so that our access to God is mediate, Christ's immediate. We plead what he hath done for us as our Surety, and not anything done by ourselves; but he pleads what was done only by himself. We acknowledge, in all our supplications, that we are unworthy of the least of his mercies; whereas he appears in our behalf before God, as one who is worthy to have that granted which he pleads for.

### *The Manner of Christ's Intercession.*

We shall now consider how Christ makes intercession.

1. It is observed that he does this by appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth. The allusion is to the practice of attorneys or advocates in civil courts, when a cause is to be tried; in which case the plaintiff or defendant does not appear himself, but his advocate appears for him. Thus Christ 'appears in the presence of God for us.' This virtually includes the nature of a plea. For understanding it, let it be considered that as God cannot, consistently with the glory of his divine perfections, save any of the fallen race of mankind upon any other condition than that satisfaction should be given to his justice, and such a price of redemption paid as tends to secure the glory of his holiness and other perfections; so he has, in his eternal covenant with the Son, promised that, if he would perform this work, he would bring his people to glory. Christ, on the other hand, undertook it with the encouragement that, when he had perfected it, he should be received into glory as a public testimony that justice was fully satisfied. Hence, his being set at God's right hand in heavenly places, is a convincing evidence to angels and men, that his work is brought to perfection. Accordingly, his being there, or appearing in heaven, contains the nature of a plea; more especially if we consider him as appearing there as our Head and complete Redeemer, who has finished the work which he came into the world to perform. This I take to be the principal idea in Christ's intercession.

If it be farther inquired, whether he makes use of a voice, as we do when we pray for ourselves or others; I dare not deny that he does, since he made use of words when he prayed for his people on earth; which was a short specimen of his intercession for them in heaven. Yet it must be considered that it is impossible for words to express the particular necessities of every one whom he appears for in heaven, at the same time; and to suppose that Christ represents the case of one at one time, and another at another, as we do when we pray for different persons, is hardly sufficient to answer all the valuable ends of his intercession for all his people at all times. Nor are we to suppose, since the human nature of Christ is not omniscient, that he has therein a comprehensive view at once of all the particular necessities of his people; for that would be to confound his human nature with his divine. And it is only in the human nature that he prays; though the efficacy of his prayer is founded on the infinite value of his oblation performed in it, which, as was formerly observed,<sup>f</sup> was the result of its union with the divine. Hence

when Christ is said to make use of words in interceding for his people, they are to be considered principally as expressive of their wants and infirmities in a general way; so that a few comprehensive words may include the general idea of those things which are common to them all. In this respect, I am far from denying that Christ, in interceding for his people, makes use of words. But, when we consider his being in heaven, or appearing in the presence of God in behalf of his people, as virtually containing, as was before hinted, the nature of a plea, it extends itself to every particular necessity of those for whom he intercedes at all times.

2. It is farther observed that Christ, in making intercession, declares his will to have the merit of his obedience and sacrifice applied to all believers. Thus he says, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,'<sup>g</sup> &c. Here he does, as it were, make a demand of what is due to him, in right of his purchase; and so his intercession is distinguished from a supplication or entreaty, that God would bestow an unmerited favour. All our prayers, indeed, are supplications that God would bestow upon us undeserved blessings; but Christ's prayer is a kind of demand of a debt due to him, pursuant to the merit of his obedience and sufferings. Moreover, this mode of speaking may be farther understood, as containing an intimation of his divine will to have what he purchased, in his human nature, applied to his people; though this is rather a consequence of his intercession, than, properly speaking, a formal act of it.

3. It is farther observed, that he intercedes for his people, by answering all accusations which may be brought in against them. Thus the apostle<sup>h</sup> supposes a charge to have been brought in against God's elect, and that they were under a sentence of condemnation; and shows how this sentence is reversed by the death of Christ, and the charge answered by his intercession. If we consider the many things laid to the charge of God's elect, either by the world, Satan, or their own consciences, these are supposed to be either false or true. What is falsely alleged, Christ, as their Advocate, answers, by denying the charge; and undertakes to vindicate them from it. But when the thing laid to their charge is undeniably true, as, for instance, that they are sinners, and have contracted guilt, and deserve to be for ever banished from the presence of God; this Christ undertakes to answer no otherwise than by pleading the merit of his obedience and satisfaction, whereby they obtain remission of sins and a right to eternal life.

### *The Results of Christ's Intercession.*

Christ, by his intercession, procures for his people many invaluable privileges, three of which are mentioned in this Answer.

1. Quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings. This supposes that the best believers on earth, by reason of the remains of indwelling corruption, are liable to many sinful infirmities. Accordingly, it is said, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;<sup>i</sup> and, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'<sup>k</sup> The sins of believers, too, have a proportionable degree of guilt attending them; and this guilt has a tendency to make the conscience uneasy, unless we have an Advocate who has a sufficient plea to allege in our defence. But such an one is Christ; and consequently his intercession procures for us this privilege. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'<sup>l</sup>

2. He procures for us also access, with boldness, to the throne of grace. As sin renders us guilty; so guilt exposes us to fear, and a dread of coming before the throne of God, as a God of infinite holiness and justice. But, when he is represented as sitting on a throne of grace, as the consequence of Christ's death and intercession, our servile fear is removed, and we are encouraged, as the apostle says, to 'come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'<sup>m</sup>

g John xvii. 24.

h Rom. viii. 33, 34.

i Eccles. vii. 20.

k 1 John i. 8.

l 1 John ii. 1.

m Heb. iv. 16.



3. Another consequence of Christ's intercession, is the acceptance of our persons and services; first, of our persons, then of our services; as it is said, 'The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering.'<sup>n</sup> The acceptance of our persons is a branch of our justification, which is founded on Christ's sacrifice and intercession, as it is said, 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved';<sup>o</sup> and the acceptance of our services, which are performed by faith, supposes the removal of the guilt which attends them by reason of our sinful infirmities. Thus God's people are called 'an holy priesthood,' and are said 'to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'<sup>p</sup>

Let us consider now, how Christ's intercession ought to be improved by us. It is a great remedy against those desponding or despairing thoughts which we are sometimes liable to, by reason of the guilt of sin, when charged on our consciences. In this case, we should give a check to ourselves, and say, with the psalmist, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?'<sup>q</sup> Why should we entertain such sad and melancholy thoughts, when Christ intercedes on our behalf for the forgiveness of all our sins? Our sincere repentance, too, together with the exercise of the graces which accompany it, will afford us an evidence of our interest in his intercession; and this will be an expedient to raise our dejected spirits, and fill us with the joy of his salvation.—Again, Christ's intercession is to be improved by us, as an encouragement to prayer; and as a farther ground to conclude, that our poor, broken, imperfect breathings shall be heard and answered for his sake who pleads our cause.—Moreover, his intercession is a great inducement to universal holiness; since we have ground to conclude, that those services which are performed to his glory, shall be accepted on account of his intercession.

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### CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT.

QUESTION LVI. *How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?*

ANSWER. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day, in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

#### *The Object and Period of Christ's Second Advent.*

Our Saviour, being in his exalted state, is to continue at the right hand of God till he has finished the remaining part of his work in the application of redemption, and, by his Spirit, in the methods of his providence and grace, brought in the whole number of the elect. After this follows another branch of his mediatorial glory, when he shall come again to judge the world at the last day. This is the subject of the present Answer.

Though he is already solemnly invested with a power of exercising judgment, and is continually distributing rewards and punishments in the course of his providence; yet the full manifestation of his glory, as Judge of quick and dead, and that in a visible manner in his human nature, is deferred till the last day. Though he is now known by the judgments which he executes, and which are often attended with wonderful displays of his divine glory; and though the eternal state of all men is fixed by him at their death, at which time a particular judgment is passed on them by him, it being 'appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment';<sup>r</sup> yet these present acts of judgment are done without those external and visible marks of glory in his human nature with which he shall appear in the end of time. This is styled, 'the last day';<sup>s</sup> and, in respect to its being such, that

<sup>n</sup> Gen. iv. 4.

<sup>o</sup> Eph. i. 6.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Psal. xlii. 11.

<sup>r</sup> Heb. ix. 27.

<sup>s</sup> John xi. 24; xii. 48.

measure of duration which we generally call time will be ended, and another, which is distinguished from it, and which, by reason of its having no end, is called eternity, shall commence. Not that it is like the eternity of God, without succession; but some think it differs from time, principally in this, that it shall not be described by the same measures that it now is; nor shall the motion of the heavenly bodies produce those effects which they do in the frame of nature, whereby the various changes of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, follow each other in their respective courses. Some, indeed, think that the period of the final judgment is called 'a day' in the same sense as the present season or dispensation of grace is sometimes called the sinner's 'day,'<sup>t</sup> or the day of God's patience and long-suffering. When this shall be at an end, and the gospel, which is compared to a glorious light shining in it, shall be no longer preached, the design of it being fully answered, the period immediately following, when Christ shall come to judgment, may well be styled the last day.

This glorious appearing of Christ to judge the world, is set in opposition to that part of his state of humiliation in which he was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, and is designed to aggravate the crime of those at whose tribunal he stood, who, though he then told them of this matter, namely, that 'hereafter they should see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,'<sup>u</sup> yet believed him not. His glorious appearing may be considered also as set in opposition to all that contempt which his name, interest, and gospel, daily meet with in an ungodly world; whereby he is, as it were, judged and condemned afresh, and the unjust sentence which was passed upon him in effect approved of; from all which he shall be for ever vindicated, when his glory shines forth in a most illustrious manner, as calling the whole world to stand at his tribunal, and rewarding every one according to his works.

The time when Christ shall thus come to judge the world, is not known by either angels or men. Indeed, our Saviour himself, while on earth, speaks of it as a secret which had not been made known to him as man.<sup>x</sup> The reason why God has thus concealed it is, that he would not give occasion to any to indulge the least degree of carnal security, just as, for the same reason, he has not made known to us the term or bounds of life; but that we may be always ready for his coming. Hence, we cannot but reckon it an instance of unwarrantable presumption in several Jewish writers, and some of the Fathers, after them,<sup>y</sup> to suppose, as they do, that the world shall continue six thousand years from the creation; that the world's having been made in six days, and the seventh ordained to be a sabbath, had a mystical signification; that, in its application to this matter, a day answers to a thousand years; and that, as the world was two thousand years without the written word or law of God, and afterwards two thousand years under the law, so the days of the Messiah shall continue two thousand years, and then follows the eternal sabbatism

<sup>t</sup> Luke xix. 42.

<sup>u</sup> Matt. xxvi. 64.

<sup>x</sup> Mark xiii. 32.

<sup>y</sup> As for the Jewish writers, they mention a tradition taken from one Elias, which, some think, refers to a spurious writing which went under the name of the prophet Elijah. But this they leave uncertain; neither do they signify whether it was a written or an oral tradition; nor do they intimate when or where this Elias lived. However, the tradition was received by many of them. It is mentioned in the Talmud in Tract. Sanhedrim, cap. xi. § 29. Edit. à Cocc., 'Traditio est domus Eliæ: Sex mille annos durat mundus. Bis mille annis inauitas et vastitas. Bis mille annis Lex. Denique bis mille annis dies Christi. At vero propter peccata nostra et plurima et enormia abierunt ex his, qui abierunt. The same is mentioned in another Talmudic Treatise, called *Avoda Sara*, [Vid. eund. edit. ab. Edzard. cap. i. page 65. cum ejusd. Annot. page 244 et seq.] Manasseh Ben-Israel asserts the same thing, [Vid. ejusd. de Creat. Probl. 25.] Other writers among them improve upon this conjecture, and pretend that, as the sun was created on the fourth day, so the Messiah was to come after 4000 years, by which they appear to be self-condemned. However, as an expedient to disembarass themselves, they all pretend that Christ's coming is deferred for their sins; which evasion is too weak to ward off the evidence which we have for the truth of Christianity. That several of the Fathers imbibed the notion concerning the world's continuing 6000 years, according to the number of the days of the creation, is evident. Lactantius begins his millennium then, and supposes that the thousand years, from thence to the end of time, answers to the seventh day or sabbath of rest, [Vid. Lactant. de Vit. Beat. § 14.] Augustin, who does not adopt the doctrine of the millennium, supposes that time will end with the six thousand years, which answers to the six days of the creation; and then, according to him, follows an eternal sabbatism, [Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xx. cap. 7.]



at Christ's second coming. As for the Jews who speak of this matter, their unbelief is condemned out of their own mouths; for they do, as it were, concede, that the time in which the Messiah was to come, was that in which he actually appeared. The opinion which we have stated, however, is a groundless conjecture, so far as it respects the end of the world. Indeed, it is an entering into a secret which is altogether hid from mankind.

*The manner of Christ's Second Advent.*

We are now to consider that glory with which Christ shall appear, when he comes to judge the world. It is said, he shall come in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, and with other circumstances which will be very awful and tremendous.

1. He shall come in his own glory. By this we are to understand, that the glory of his divine nature shall shine forth, or be demonstrated, in a more illustrious manner than it has hitherto been. When he was on earth, this glory had, as it were, a vail put on it, by reason of the low and humbled state of his human nature. But, when he shall come again in his exalted state, it will never be a matter of doubt to any, whether he be God incarnate or not. We may add, that there will be many things done by him, when he comes to judgment, which will be eminently the effects of his divine power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and faithfulness; whereby the glory of his divine nature will farther appear, in determining the final state, both of angels and of men.

2. It is said also that he shall appear in his Father's glory. For understanding this, let us consider that whatever work he is engaged in, or glory he receives, as Mediator, takes its rise from the Father. It was he that called him to perform it, 'sanctified, and sent him into the world,' furnished him with a human nature, united to his divine Person. From him it was that he received a commission to lay down his life, and to take it up again. And it is he who hath appointed the day in which he will judge the world; and pursuant to whose decree and appointment, he will come to perform this glorious work.—Again, every thing which he does as Mediator, is referred to the glory of the Father. Accordingly, he says, 'I honour my Father.'<sup>a</sup> Hence, the work of judgment, which is, as it were, the laying of the top-stone of the glorious fabric of our salvation, will tend eminently to set forth the Father's glory, who laid the foundation-stone of that fabric.—Further, whatever work he performs for the honour of the Father, he receives from him a testimony of his highest approbation of him therein. When he was on earth, as the apostle says, 'he received from God the Father honour and glory; when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'<sup>a</sup> This testimony was given to him at his baptism, and transfiguration 'in the holy mount;' the latter of which the apostle more immediately refers to, as appears by the following context.—We may conclude, therefore, that, as his coming to judgment will be the most illustrious part of his mediatorial work, he will have the most glorious testimony from the Father. Indeed, his receiving the saints to heaven, who are styled, 'Blessed of his Father,' who shall 'inherit the kingdom which he had prepared for them from the foundation of the world,'<sup>b</sup> will be a standing monument of his approbation of him, or well-pleasedness with whatever he has done in order to their salvation. Hence, he may well be said to come in the glory of his Father.

3. It is farther said that he shall come in the glory of his holy angels. This, indeed, is to be understood in a sense different from that of his appearing in his own glory, or that of his Father's, for the angels are said rather to behold and admire his glory, than to confer any glory upon him. Still they are described as attending him in his coming. Thus it is said, 'He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.'<sup>c</sup> He will appear in the glory of his angels, as they shall be his retinue, and bear a part in the solemnity of that day; whereby they not only acknowledge his rightful authority to engage in that glorious work, but their willingness

to attend him in any part of it in which he thinks fit to employ them, as ministering spirits in subserviency to the proceedings of that day. This leads us to consider that glorious solemnity, together with some things which will be done preparatory to Christ's judging the world. Accordingly it is said,

4. He shall come 'with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.' These are the apostle's words;<sup>d</sup> and he adds that the voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet shall be followed by the resurrection from the dead, and the change of those who, being found alive, 'shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.' Elsewhere he says, 'The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.'<sup>e</sup> Our Saviour also says that a throne shall be erected, and that 'when he shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, he shall sit on the throne of his glory.'<sup>f</sup> We read likewise of 'the gathering' of the whole world before him, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked; which is said to be done by the ministry of angels.<sup>g</sup> These things will go immediately before Christ's judging the world. But as it is expressly said, in this Answer, that he shall come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, this we shall particularly consider.

When he is said to come with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, it does not seem probable that by 'a shout,' is meant an inarticulate sound, in the sense in which the word is sometimes used by us, as signifying that joy and triumph which is expressed by those who shout for victory. Yet the word may be understood in a metaphorical sense, as signifying some triumphant expressions of joy, suitable to the great occasion; or the word<sup>h</sup> which we render a shout, may signify the powerful word of command given by our Saviour, whereby the dead are called out of their graves. Agreeably to this, it is added that Christ shall come with the voice of the archangel. This name has given occasion to some to inquire whether there be one among the angels who is called so, as being the prince and chief of all the rest, who will receive the word immediately from Christ, and transmit it to other angels, whereby the world will be summoned to appear before his tribunal. But it is very difficult for us to understand this matter. That there is a very beautiful order and harmony among the angels, is beyond dispute; yet we have no ground to assert that one is superior to the rest, unless that be the meaning of the word 'archangel,' in this and two or three other scriptures in which we meet with it. But though I will not contend with those who are otherwise minded, I am rather inclined to think that the word is always applied to our Saviour, and that he is called the 'archangel,' as he is the Head and Sovereign of all the angels. These, as the apostle says, 'were created by him, and for him,'<sup>i</sup> and they are commanded 'to worship him';<sup>k</sup> and it is elsewhere said, 'Angels, and authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him.'<sup>l</sup> He certainly, therefore, has a greater right to the glorious character of archangel than any creature. If it be objected, that Christ's being said to come with the voice of the archangel, denotes that the archangel is distinguished from him; it may be replied, that that does not necessarily follow; for the meaning of the words may be, that the Lord shall descend with a shout, or powerful word of command, given forth by him, who is the Prince and Lord of all the angels, and transmitted by them to the whole world, who shall be hereby summoned to appear before him.

Again, he is said to come with the sound of a trumpet. This seems to allude to the use of trumpets to gather the hosts of Israel together, when they were to march by their armies, or in the day of their solemn festivals, and in the year of Jubilee, which was proclaimed thereby. Accordingly, this eternal Jubilee, and triumph of the saints, is said to begin with the sound of a trumpet. Not that there shall be a material trumpet, like those in use among us, as some who have low apprehensions of the glory of this day have supposed. We are not to think that there is nothing figurative in the mode of speaking; for the principal thing intended is, that there shall be some glorious ensigns of the divine Majesty, or effects of

d 1 Thess. iv. 16.  
h Κἀνταυτα.

e 1 Cor. xv. 52.  
i Coloss. i. 16.

f Matt. xxv. 31, 32.  
k Heb. i. 6.

g Chap. xxiv. 31; xix. 28.  
l 1 Pet. iii. 22.



his power, which shall fill his saints with exceeding great joy, and his enemies with terror, and shall be a signal to all to appear before his tribunal. This is all we need to determine concerning it; though I will not altogether deny the literal sense of the words, provided they be understood in the same manner as when God appeared from Mount Sinai, with 'the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud.'<sup>m</sup> It is not improbable that there will be a sound like that of a trumpet formed in the air, by the immediate power of God, which shall be heard throughout the world, and which will be an intimation to all that the great Judge of quick and dead is at hand, and will be a branch of that external glory with which he shall appear.

We might here have proceeded to consider Christ as seated on his throne, and the glorious work which he shall be engaged in, in judging the world in righteousness, which is the last thing mentioned in this Answer. But, as we shall be led, in discussing some following Answers,<sup>n</sup> particularly to insist on that subject, and to speak concerning the persons to be judged, as set at Christ's right or left hand, together with the manner of proceeding in that day, the sentence passed, and the final state of angels and men determined thereby, together with the consequence both to the righteous and wicked; we shall at present proceed to speak concerning the application of redemption, or the benefits procured by Christ's mediation.

## THE APPLICATION OF THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

QUESTION LVII. *What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?*

ANSWER. Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

QUESTION LVIII. *How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured?*

ANSWER. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

QUESTION LIX. *Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?*

ANSWER. Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it, who are, in time, by the Holy Ghost, enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel.

### *What the Benefits of Redemption are.*

In the first of these Answers, we have an account of the blessings which Christ, as Mediator, has procured for his people, namely, redemption, with all the other blessings of the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is the foundation of all the blessings which we enjoy, or hope for; and, among these, redemption is included. But as this has been already considered, we need not at present enlarge on it. As for those benefits of the covenant of grace which are the consequents of our redemption, they differ from it in this respect, that redemption is said to be wrought out *for us* by Christ in his own Person, while some of these are more especially considered as wrought *in us*. These benefits are particularly mentioned in several following Answers; which treat of effectual calling, sanctification, repentance unto life, and other graces, which are inherent in us, whereby our hearts and actions are changed and conformed to the will of God. There are likewise other blessings which more especially respect our state God-ward; such as justification, in which our sins are pardoned and our persons accepted,—and adoption, in which we are made and dealt with as God's children. There are, moreover, several other benefits which follow these, whereby the work of grace is carried on, and we are enabled to go on in the ways of God, with spiritual peace and joy, in believing, till we come to glory

*The Application of Redemption a Divine Work.*

It is farther observed, that we are made partakers of these benefits, by the application of them to us. First, they are purchased; and then they are applied. We are first redeemed by price; and then we are delivered by the almighty power of God. The application of the benefits is said to be more especially the work of the Holy Ghost; while the purchase of them belongs only to the Mediator.

In considering the application of redemption, we may observe that it is a divine work. It is therefore not to be ascribed to ourselves, but is 'the gift of God.'<sup>o</sup> And as it is a work appropriate to God; so it is, in several scriptures, said to be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, we are said to be 'born of the Spirit,'<sup>p</sup> and 'saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'<sup>q</sup> On this account, the Spirit is sometimes called the Spirit of holiness and of power, and he is said to dwell in us; which plainly shows that he is eminently glorified in the application of redemption.

But as it is said, in one of the Answers we are explaining, that this is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost, which is a mode of speaking often used by those who treat on this subject, we are called on to exercise great caution. When we speak of it as the work especially of God the Holy Ghost, we are not to understand it as though the Father and the Son were not equally concerned in it. For it is allowed by all who have just ideas of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, that those works in which any of the divine perfections are displayed, belong equally and alike to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.<sup>r</sup> Hence, when the application of redemption is said more especially to belong to the Holy Ghost, we are to understand only that this work is peculiarly attributed to the Spirit, inasmuch as hereby he demonstrates his personal glory, in the subserviency of the work performed by him, to the glory of the Father, and of Christ the Mediator. But this we shall pass over, having insisted on it elsewhere.<sup>s</sup>

*How and to whom Redemption is applied.*

We are now to consider redemption, as certainly and effectually applied to all for whom it was purchased, together with the character of the persons who are interested in it. In this account of its application, there is something supposed, namely, that it is not applied to all mankind. This every one will allow; for even they who plead for universal redemption do not assert the universal application of it, or that all mankind shall be eventually saved, as being contrary to the whole tenor of scripture. We must conclude, therefore, that it is applied to none but those for whom Christ has purchased it. This is evident from the fact, that the design of the purchase of it was, that they who were redeemed might reap the benefit of it.

In this sense it is farther observed that it is *certainly* and *effectually* applied to them. From this it follows, that the application of it does not depend on the will of man, or on some uncertain conditions which God expects we shall perform, that so the death of Christ might be rendered effectual. For whatever condition can be assigned as conducive to its application, is the purchase of Christ's death. On this account, the Spirit's applying one saving benefit, would need to be considered as a condition of his applying another; and this is not only an improper sense of the word 'condition,' but contains several things derogatory to the divine glory. But this subject needs not be farther insisted on, as we have had occasion to speak of it elsewhere.<sup>t</sup>

This leads us to consider the character of the persons to whom redemption is applied. These are described as persons who are enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel. This is a very extensive character, belonging to those who

<sup>o</sup> Eph. ii. 8.    <sup>p</sup> John iii. 5.    <sup>q</sup> Titus iii. 5.    <sup>r</sup> Thus divines generally say, 'Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.'    <sup>s</sup> See Sect. 'The Economy of the Persons in the Godhead,' under Quest. ix. x, xi.    <sup>t</sup> See Quest. xxxii. and Sect. 'The Extent of the Atonement,' under Quest. xlv.



are interested in Christ's redemption. It includes all other graces which accompany or flow from saving faith. We are not by nature disposed to believe in Christ, but are rather averse to it; so that, as is farther said, we are *enabled* to believe in him, as will be considered under a following Answer.<sup>a</sup> And this is said to be done according to the gospel; because the gospel not only discovers to us the object of faith, but contains many invaluable promises of this and other graces which accompany salvation. The grace of faith is farther said to be wrought in time, to denote that, though the purpose relating to it was from eternity, and the purchase of it was made before we had a being, yet the application of it is in God's appointed time, when, after we have run great lengths in impenitence and unbelief, he is pleased to call us by his grace, and thereby bring us into the way of salvation.

## THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT THE GOSPEL

**QUESTION LX.** *Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved, by their living according to the light of nature?*

**ANSWER.** They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the church.

### *Opinions and Preliminary Remarks respecting the Salvability of the Heathen.*

THIS Answer is an inference deduced from the doctrine of the preceding. For if redemption be applied to those only who are enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel, it follows that they who have not the gospel, cannot be made partakers of this privilege. The general scope and design of the Answer, is to assert the necessity of divine revelation, as well as of faith in Christ, against those who suppose that the gate of salvation is much wider than our Saviour has determined it to be, who says, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'<sup>x</sup> I am sensible that this doctrine cannot but be disrelished by those who are not disposed to exclude any from a possibility of attaining salvation, and are ready to charge those with groundless censoriousness and want of Christian temper who pass so severe a sentence on so great a part of mankind as are included in it. It is contrary also to the presumptuous hope of corrupt nature, which is unwarrantably prone to expect salvation, without faith in Christ. This expectation some defend by arguments, but many more by their practice.

They who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, design to advance the goodness of God, and are ready to conclude that it is inconsistent with that divine perfection to exclude any from a possibility of salvation. It is hence not agreeable to their method of reasoning, to confine the means of grace to so small a number as that of those to whom the gospel is preached. Accordingly, many of them have asserted, that the Heathen, as well as Christians, are put into a salvable state by the death of Christ; so that they shall be saved if they live according to the dictates of the light of nature, though they know nothing of Christ and the gospel. But, in order to their maintaining this argument, they have some great difficulties to surmount; inasmuch as, while they attempt to aggrandize the mercy of God, they seem to overthrow the necessity of divine revelation, as well as run counter to the sense of many scriptures. On this account, others who have asserted universal redemption, have not extended the universality of it any farther than to those who are favoured with the gospel. They either leave the salvability of the Heathen as a matter which we know nothing of, and ought not to inquire into; or they seem to suggest that the dark traditional knowledge of the gospel, which they suppose some of the Heathen have had, was sufficient to lead them to a small degree of faith in Christ. Or as this opinion cannot well be defended, others have supposed that God may lead many of the Heathen into the knowledge of Christ, before they

go out of the world, by some secret methods not to be discerned by us. These are not willing, with the Deists, to set aside the necessity of divine revelation. Others again, who do not suppose it necessary to salvation, believe it to be necessary only in order to our farther improvement in the way of salvation; and therefore conclude, that Christianity is only a brighter or clearer way to heaven. These are more especially opposed in the Answer we are explaining.

I am sensible that the subject we are entering on has been treated with more reflection and censure than many others; and that, in maintaining it, we are supposed to conclude that the divine dispensations are too severe, and that that goodness and mercy which are God's nature and delight are not sufficiently advanced and magnified. We are told also, that it is a sour and ill-natured way of reasoning to suppose that any are put under a necessity of perishing for want of a divine revelation; and that it does not become us to pass a damnatory sentence on any, more especially on so great a part of the world as that is, who know nothing of Christ and the way of salvation by him. It is necessary for us, therefore, to premise that we pretend not to pass a judgment concerning the final state of particular persons, by concluding that they who are now strangers to Christ and his gospel shall always remain so. For we know not when, to whom, or by what means, God will reveal Christ to those who now sit in darkness, and are unacquainted with the way of salvation by him. And as for the possibility of God's revealing Christ in a secret way to those who do not sit under the sound of the gospel, we will not deny it. Yet we cannot infer the certainty of events from the possibility of them; so that we must have a clearer proof of the salvability of the heathen before we can believe it. Again, God might justly have excluded the whole race of mankind, as well as the fallen angels, from a possibility of attaining salvation; for there was nothing out of himself which moved him to have compassion on those who are the heirs of salvation, any more than on others. Farther, we are far from supposing that the heathen shall be condemned for not believing in Christ, whom they never heard of, or for not complying with the gospel overture, which was never made to them. Invincible ignorance, though an unhappiness, and a consequence of our fallen state, is not a crime. Hence, the heathen shall be judged by the law of nature. If the apostle's words, 'As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law,'<sup>y</sup> be applicable to them, which, I think, no one will deny, their condemnation cannot be equal to that of those who neglect and despise the great salvation offered to them in the gospel. Yet the heathen, who have had no other light than that of nature, cannot be exculpated from the charge of many other sins committed by them; in which respect they have rebelled against the light they have been favoured with. All of them, indeed, have not contracted the same degree of guilt with those whom the apostle describes; who committed sins contrary to nature, 'being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness,'<sup>z</sup> and many other sins of the blackest nature; and therefore all of them are not liable to the same condemnation. Indeed, some of the heathen moralists have been a blessing in many respects to the age in which they lived. By their writings and example they have endeavoured to reform it from vice and immorality; and it is certain that they shall not be punished for crimes which they have not committed. But whether the best of them shall be saved by the merits of Christ, though destitute of faith in him, is the question under our present consideration. To conclude that their good works have merited salvation, is not only contrary to the analogy of faith, but is more than what can be said concerning the best works which were ever performed by Christians; and to argue, as many do, from the goodness of God, that they shall be saved, is certainly an inconclusive way of reasoning, unless we had some intimation of his purpose relating to the subject. If God has determined to save them, we must have recourse to his revealed will, and prove from scripture that there are promises of eternal life made to those who have no interest in Christ, and that there is at least some ground for believing that some shall be happy in beholding his glory in another world, who have had no communion by faith with him in this. These things must be proved, before we can see reason to deny what is stated in this Answer; which we proceed to consider.



*No Salvation except by knowledge and belief of the Gospel.*

It is observed that they who never heard the gospel, and neither know nor believe in Christ, cannot be saved. This supposes that faith and salvation are inseparably connected. Though it is particularly applied to those who are destitute of the gospel, it is levelled against all who, whether they have the means of grace or not, presumptuously expect salvation without ground, and remain in a state of unbelief and impenitency. Here let us consider, that many who are called Christians, though they know little more than the mere name of Christ, yet doubt not that they shall be saved by his merits, and so live and die in this fatal mistake, how vile soever their conversation has been. Accordingly, the prophet Isaiah says, 'Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope.'<sup>a</sup> So Moses also describes a person who, 'when he heareth the words of this curse, yet blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.'<sup>b</sup> It is too notorious to be denied, that a great part of men who live without God in the world, though grossly ignorant and openly profane, expect to be saved; and it is one of Satan's great engines, by which he endeavours to banish all religion out of the world, to persuade his deluded subjects that all things shall go well with them, though they make no pretensions to it. This presumption is rather founded in stupidity, than supported by arguments; and is a great instance of the alienation of the mind and affections from God, and shows how deceitful and desperately wicked the heart of man is, when destitute of divine grace.

But what shall we say of those who pretend to defend this, and thereby put a sword into the hands of those who adhere to them to destroy themselves? This the Deists do. As their method of reasoning is subversive of the Christian religion, and of faith in Christ as connected with salvation, I cannot omit to mention it in this place. Though they express not a due veneration for the divine Majesty, they profess not to be Atheists, that they may not be excluded from the society of mankind, who have some degree of abhorrence of Atheism impressed on their nature. They talk, indeed, of God, and of natural religion, but make revealed religion the subject of their scorn and ridicule. If they read the scriptures, it is apparently with a design to burlesque them, and charge them with inconsistency and self-contradiction. When they speak of revelation, or the gift of prophecy, they give it no better a term than enthusiasm; and, when they mention the failings, recorded in scripture, of those who were otherwise holy and excellent men, they take occasion maliciously to reproach them, and insinuate that they were vile persons, guilty of the most enormous crimes, and yet were saved; and they wickedly infer that there is nothing solid and substantial in religion, and that persons may be as safe and happy without it as with it. If they refer to the brightest and most excellent part of the character of the saints recorded in scripture, they suppose it to be the effect of implicit faith, and to take its rise from priestcraft. Our Saviour himself is not only divested by them of his glory, but reckoned, as they suppose Moses was of old, a designing person, who brought a new set of notions into the world to amuse and confound it. As for his miracles, which none but the blinded Jews, and they who are equally prejudiced against Christianity, ever pretended to contest, much less to vilify, they treat them with the utmost scorn and contempt, as a late writer has done, whose blasphemy has been made manifest by those who have written in defence of this part of our religion. There are other persons, however, who are not disposed to indulge so great a degree of profaneness, and have been sensible that the method we have stated is not a right one to extirpate Christianity, and cannot but be treated with the utmost abhorrence by those who read the scripture with any religious design; who, nevertheless, though they speak of God, yet glorify him not as God. These will, indeed, allow him to have some divine perfections; but they cast a reproach on his providence, and suppose that he is too great to be affected with or concerned about the actions and behaviour

of so mean a creature as man. They say, too, that as what we call sin can be no disparagement to his glory, so he is too good and pitiful to his creatures to punish them, at least, with eternal torments for it. Hence, if they allow the soul to be immortal, and capable of happiness in another world, which all of them, without exception, do not; yet they suppose that God made no creature to be for ever miserable. As for the laws he has given to mankind, which are enstamped on their nature, and which contain nothing but what might have been known without revelation, they pretend that these were designed only to keep the world in order, to promote the interest of civil society, to prevent men from murdering one another, disturbing the tranquillity of the government under which they live, or invading the property of others; which is not doing as they would have others to do to them. As for the punishment of sin, that they say is no farther to be regarded than as vice and immorality render persons obnoxious to bodily diseases, to some marks of infamy which custom has annexed to them, or to the lash of human laws. This is all the scheme of religion which some among the Deists endeavour to propagate; and everything which is built more immediately upon divine revelation, they reckon not only unnecessary but enthusiastic, and no other than a contrivance of some who, with a view to their own interest, endeavour to puzzle the world with mysterious doctrines which neither they nor their votaries understand. It must be supposed that these men do not think that the knowledge of Christ, or faith in him, is necessary to salvation; yet they doubt not that it shall go well with them in another world, if there be a future state,—which, through the influence of that scepticism which is, for the most part, a concomitant of Deism, they sometimes question. We shall not make so great a digression from our present subject as to give a particular reply to their assertions; which, though propagated with much assurance, are not pretended to be defended by solid arguments. Indeed, the whole gospel is a reply to them. Whatever doctrine of the gospel is maintained by Christians, will have a tendency to give them an abhorrence of their scheme, and confirm their faith against such attempts as are used to stagger and pervert it.

Having thus spoken concerning the methods which are used by some to overthrow revealed religion, and the necessity of faith in Christ to salvation, we shall now proceed to consider on what grounds persons hope to be saved without the knowledge of Christ or faith in him.

1. Some have no other ground of hope than the goodness of the divine nature. They think that, because God delights not in the misery of any of his creatures, but takes all occasions to make himself known as a God of infinite kindness and compassion, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, and who will not resent those injuries which we may offer to him, but will lay those under eternal obligations to him who have, by their sins, rendered themselves unworthy to be saved by him; they may therefore hope that all things shall go well with them, though they are utter strangers to the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and are altogether destitute of faith in him. But this we cannot call any other than a presumptuous confidence. It is nothing else but to abuse the riches of God's goodness, and to claim an interest in it without ground. It is, indeed, a very great truth, that God delights in mercy; and this attribute cannot be too much admired or advanced by us; yet it must not be set in opposition to any of his other perfections. He is certainly a just and holy, as well as a merciful God; and therefore we are not to suppose that one of these perfections shall be glorified, to the dishonour of another. Might not fallen angels as well say that, because God is merciful, he will deliver them from those chains of darkness and misery in which they are held; as men may say that the mercy of God should be presumed to be a foundation of hope to those who have no ground to conclude their interest in it, as expecting it in another way than that in which he has declared his will to glorify it? It is certain that whensoever God designs to glorify his mercy in saving persons, he first determines to advance the glory of it in making them meet for salvation, by sanctifying or purifying their hearts by faith. To separate these two, therefore, is a dishonour to the divine perfections. God never designed to save his people in sin; but first to save them from it, and then to crown with complete blessedness the work which he had begun. Hence, the man who lives in all excess of riot, and yet hopes for salvation,



must be guilty of a groundless presumption. When we read, in scripture, of God's extending mercy, we find that there are certain marks and characters given of those persons who have ground to lay claim to an interest in it. Thus it is said, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy;'<sup>c</sup> but then it is added, that this 'mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.'<sup>d</sup> Elsewhere the psalmist admires the goodness of God, which is doubtless, beyond expression, wonderful, when he says, respecting the present displays of goodness, and the future reserves of it, 'O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up, and wrought!' but it follows that this belongs only 'to them that fear him, and to them that trust in him before the sons of men!'<sup>e</sup> Elsewhere too, it is said, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies,'<sup>f</sup> that is, to them, exclusive of all others. Moreover, we never read of God's glorifying his mercy but in Christ; first in bringing sinners nigh to him by his blood, and then in applying, by his Spirit, the redemption purchased. Thus the apostle says, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;'<sup>g</sup> and then he adds, as an expedient to give sinners a ground of hope that they have an interest in this privilege, that, in the gospel, God sends an embassy to them, to 'beseech them,' as they value their own souls, 'to be reconciled to God,' by complying with the gospel overture, and repenting of and desisting from their rebellion against him. When he is represented as 'the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,' he is, at the same time, styled 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,'<sup>h</sup> to denote that his mercy is displayed in and through a Mediator. Hence, our hope of attaining it must be founded in our interest in him; and this cannot be considered otherwise than as including the grace of faith. Are they who have a right to expect salvation called 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ?'<sup>i</sup> They are farther described as 'conformed to his image.'<sup>k</sup> Have they a right to 'the inheritance of the saints in light?' They are characterized as 'made meet for it.'<sup>l</sup> And when the apostle exhorts persons to 'look for the mercy of God unto eternal life,' he intimates that their doing so would be a presumptuous expectation, were it separate from their 'keeping themselves in the love of God.'<sup>m</sup>

2. Others have no foundation for their expectation of salvation, but by extenuating sin; and are hardly persuaded to confess themselves to be sinners, how vile soever their conduct be. Thus it is said concerning Ephraim, 'The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress;' yet he refuses to acknowledge this, and says, 'In all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.'<sup>n</sup> So, when the prophet Jeremiah exhibits a charge against a degenerate age, and tells them, 'Thou hast taught the wicked ones thy ways, also in thy skirts is found the blood of the poor innocents,' what abominable stupidity were they guilty of when they reply, 'Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me!'<sup>o</sup> Sometimes the persons of whom I speak build their hope of salvation, though they cannot exculpate themselves from the charge of sin, on the mere supposition that some others are greater sinners than themselves. Thus the Pharisee pleases himself that he was not guilty of some notorious sins,—that he was no extortioner, or adulterer, nor even as the Publican, whom he looked upon with great contempt.<sup>p</sup> Or if they are forced to conclude themselves to be among the number of the vilest and most notorious sinners; yet they presume that God will not punish them eternally for their sins, but will make some allowance for the propensity of human nature to sin, or the force of those temptations which they have not been able to withstand. Or, if they are liable to any extraordinary afflictions in this life, they suppose that these are sufficient to compensate for all the sins they have committed, and that therefore their miseries shall not be extended beyond it. Hence, that which lies at the root of this presumptuous hope, is a secret denial of the infinite demerit of sin, or that it deserves eternal punishment. Now, that we may show the vanity of the expectation which has no other foundation than this, let us consider, that to exten-

c Psal. ciii. 8.  
g 2 Cor. v. 19.  
in Jude 21.

d Verses 17, 18.  
h Chap. i. 3.  
n Hos. xii. 7, 8.

e Psal. xxxi. 19.  
i Rom. viii. 17.  
o Jer. ii. 33—35.

f Psal. xxv. 10.  
k Verse 29.  
l Col. i. 12  
p Luke xviii. 11.

nate sin, is an argument that persons are unacquainted with themselves, and know not the plague of their own hearts. This expectation, therefore, is the most destructive fallacy which men can put on themselves, and a sad token that they are given up to judicial blindness. When God shall charge sin on the conscience, or as the psalmist says, 'reprove them,' and 'set their iniquities in order before their eyes,'<sup>q</sup> which he will do at one time or other, they will appear to have been self-deceived, and the ground of their hope of salvation will sink under them.—Again, to suppose that sin does not deserve eternal punishment, is an affront to the holiness of God, and a disbelief of those threatenings which are denounced against it. It is, in effect, to deny that sin is objectively infinite; which cannot be done without denying, in effect, that God is a God of infinite perfection. It is a flying in the face of his justice, and charging him with mal-administration. To such as are guilty of it, it may be said, as Elihu says to Job, 'Wilt thou condemn him that is most just?'<sup>r</sup> or, as God says to reprove and humble him, 'Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?'<sup>s</sup> But, as the eternity of the punishment of sin is particularly insisted on, under a following Answer,<sup>t</sup> we shall say no more on the subject at present, but that this method of reasoning has a tendency to banish all religion out of the world, and is never made use of except by those who make no pretensions to it.

3. If it be reckoned preposterous for any one to found his hope of salvation on the extenuating of his sins, others have a more plausible pretence. Though they are not only destitute of the grace of faith, but strangers to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, they expect to be saved because they perform some works which are materially good. If they perform some moral duties, or abstain from some gross enormities, much more if they have a form of godliness, and are reckoned to be religious persons by the world, and, in many instances, are useful to those with whom they converse; they are ready to conclude that they do, as it were, merit eternal life, and that God becomes a debtor to them. The class formerly mentioned have too light thoughts of sin: these set too great a value on their duties; and to do this is contrary to what our Saviour says, 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.'<sup>u</sup> I would not have it thought that by these remarks I design to depreciate any moral duties or virtues, which have a degree of excellency in proportion to their nature. The only thing which I intend is, that good works which do not proceed from a right principle, and are not performed for right ends, if there be not an internal principle of grace implanted in regeneration, or faith in Christ, as the main-spring of them, or if they be put in the room of Christ's righteousness, and so made the foundation of our justification or right to eternal life, are not accepted by God; so that the hope of salvation which is founded on them is vain and unwarrantable.

4. There are others who, as it is expressed in this Answer, frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess, and doubt not but, in so doing, they shall be saved. This presumption is defended by many who call themselves Christians, who suppose that a person may be saved in any religion, whether true or false. These do not hesitate to say that, if they lived at Rome, they would embrace the Popish doctrines; or, if in Turkey, they would profess the Mahommedan faith; or, had they been born in India, among the Pagans, they should have had ground to conclude that they were in a safe way to heaven. This opinion certainly reflects dishonour on the Christian name. It also savours so much of scepticism, that those who hold it must be supposed to believe that there is nothing certain in religion, or that the different modes of it are only a political engine, a mere human invention, which stands upon no other basis than tradition, and has nothing else to propagate it but implicit faith. This is the notion which they who set themselves against divine revelation entertain concerning religion in general. Or, if there be any thing in religion which escapes their reproach and censure, it is only such maxims as are founded on the laws of nature, such as that we ought to do to others as we would have them do to us; that we ought to govern our passions, that they may not be outrageous, and disturb not



only our own peace but that of all civil societies; and that we must not offer injuries or violence to those whom we converse with, but rather be gentle, good-humoured, kind, and compassionate to them, and abstain from those enormities which are abhorrent to nature. An attention to these matters they suppose to be sufficient to denominate any one a good man, who needs not entertain any doubt of his own salvation. But this is to set aside all revelation, and disbelieve the demonstrative evidence which we have of the truth of the Christian religion. It is to cast contempt on that, as unnecessary, which possesses the greatest excellency. It also involves a denial of that which is experienced by all true believers, namely, that revealed religion has the greatest tendency to dispose them to glorify God, and to do good to men. These sensibly find that they have the greatest comfort, and most solid ground of hope, in firmly adhering to religion, in laying all the stress of their salvation on what is revealed in the gospel, and in desiring to adhere steadfastly by faith to Christ as the only way of salvation.

*Salvation only by Christ.*

It is farther observed, in this Answer, that there is salvation in no other than Christ. The scripture is very full and express to this purpose. Thus it is said, 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'<sup>x</sup> Elsewhere also the apostle says, 'Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'<sup>y</sup> On him the church is built. He is the only Mediator between God and man, the only Redeemer, who purchased salvation for those who shall be made partakers of it. He laid the foundation-stone of this glorious fabric, and we must conclude, that the carrying on of the work belongs to him, till the top-stone is laid, and the work brought to perfection. On this account he is styled, 'the Author and Finisher of faith.'<sup>z</sup>

1. We may observe, then, that faith, and all other graces which accompany salvation, have a peculiar reference to Christ. We are said to 'obtain precious faith through his righteousness.'<sup>a</sup> He is said to 'dwell in the hearts' of his people 'by faith,'<sup>b</sup> and 'to increase their faith.'<sup>c</sup> He is also the object of faith. He says, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.'<sup>d</sup> The grace of faith is frequently described as a 'coming to him';<sup>e</sup> and it is such a coming as implies more than an attendance on his ordinances, for it is connected with salvation. This is the meaning of the metaphorical expression in which it is said that those who come to him 'shall never hunger nor thirst;' by which we are to understand that all their desires shall be fulfilled, and they shall be satisfied with that perfect blessedness of which he will make them partakers. Besides, it is such a coming to Christ, as is the effect of God's almighty power: he says, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.'<sup>f</sup>

That faith and all other graces which accompany salvation have a peculiar reference to Christ, will further appear if we consider that salvation is founded on his executing his three offices of Priest, Prophet, and King. The first of these he executes in our behalf; not in us, but for us, whereby faith and all other graces are purchased. As to his other two offices, namely, his prophetic and kingly, especially when the work of them is rendered effectual to salvation, his people are the subjects in whom they are executed. The work performed is internal; the consequence of it is the soul's giving that glory to him which is the result; this cannot be done without our knowing him to be a Mediator, and, as such, ordained and qualified to execute the offices; and a knowledge of these points cannot be attained without divine revelation. Moreover, the point we are considering is evident from that reasoning of the apostle in which he views our 'calling on the name of the Lord,' as inseparably connected with salvation, as necessary to it, and as proceeding from faith; and, says he, 'How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?'<sup>g</sup> For this faith supposes the preaching of the gospel; which gospel is represented, in many scriptures, as a display of the glory of Christ. It follows,

x Acts iv. 12.

c Luke xvii. 5.

1.

y 1 Cor. iii. 11.

d John xiv. 1.

z Heb. xii. 3.

e Chap. vi. 35.

4 M

a 2 Pet. i. 1.

t Verse 44.

b Eph. iii. 17.

g Rom. x. 14.

therefore, that there is no salvation without divine revelation, or that they who never heard of Christ, and consequently never believed in him, have no right or claim to it. We might observe also the account which the same apostle gives of that worship which is necessary to salvation, when he says, 'Through him we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.'<sup>b</sup> To have access to God is certainly necessary to salvation; and this is by a Mediator, and is elsewhere called 'coming to God by him.' But this cannot be done without the knowledge of him as the way to the Father, and that faith in him which is founded on knowing him. Moreover, salvation is to be considered as a promised blessing, founded in the covenant of grace; so that they who are strangers to this covenant have no right to lay claim to its promises, which are nowhere contained but in divine revelation, and are said to be 'yea and amen in Christ, to the glory of God.'<sup>i</sup> What hope, then, can there be of obtaining these promised blessings without the knowledge of Christ?

2. That there is no salvation without faith in Christ, as founded in divine revelation, farther appears from the fact that there is no justification without it. Justification is inseparably connected with salvation by the apostle, when he says, 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'<sup>k</sup> To separate these two, is to suppose that a person may expect salvation, without being delivered from the guilt of sin, and the condemning sentence of the law; or to have a right to eternal life, without being able to plead any righteousness which is worthy of God's acceptance. But to do this is certainly to build our hope on a sandy foundation, and is contrary to those scriptures which set forth the impossibility of our being justified by the works of the law, or the necessity of faith in Christ's righteousness in order to our being justified. This the apostle Paul frequently inculcates. Hence no one can plead any thing done by him as the matter of his justification, though he could say as that apostle did, 'Touching the righteousness that is in the law, I am blameless.'<sup>l</sup> Elsewhere the apostle Paul says, 'Though I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified.'<sup>m</sup> If the best saint in the world must, to support his expectation of being discharged from condemnation, have something infinitely more valuable than any act of his own obedience; then certainly that obedience which is performed according to the dictates of the light of nature, without divine revelation, is far from being a sufficient foundation to support a person's hope of justification and salvation. But such as are destitute of the gospel, have nothing else to plead. Hence, we must conclude, as it is expressed in this Answer, that they who never heard the gospel, and believe not in Christ, cannot be saved.

3. This may be inferred also, from those scriptures which set forth the pernicious consequence of unbelief. It is said, 'He that believes not, is condemned already,' and 'shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him';<sup>n</sup> and elsewhere, 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.'<sup>o</sup> Inasmuch, too, as faith is founded on divine revelation, there are other scriptures which represent those who are destitute of it as being in a hopeless state. Thus the apostle tells the church at Ephesus, that 'when they were Gentiles,' and consequently strangers to the gospel, 'they had no hope, being without God in the world';<sup>p</sup> so that whatever knowledge they had of a God by the light of nature, or whatever blessings they received from common providence, they had not such a knowledge of him, nor such an interest in him, as gave them hope of salvation. The apostle does not speak of them as being in a hopeless state, because their conversation had been more vile than that of other Gentiles, as acting contrary to the dictates of the law of nature; but he speaks of them as Gentiles, that is, without the light of divine revelation; so that what he says concerning them, is applicable to all the heathen as such.<sup>q</sup> Again, it is observed in scripture, that, before Christ was preached to the Gentiles, they were not the objects of his special care and goodness, but, in this respect, neglected by him. Accordingly it is said that, 'in times past, he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways';<sup>r</sup> and elsewhere these are called, 'times of ignorance which God winked at.'<sup>s</sup> So the passage is rendered in our translation. But

<sup>b</sup> Eph. ii. 18.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Cor. i. 20.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. viii. 30.

<sup>l</sup> Phil. iii. 6.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 4.

<sup>n</sup> John iii. 18, 36.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. viii. 24.

<sup>p</sup> Eph. ii. 12.

<sup>q</sup> It is a rule in logic, 'A qua-

tenus ad omne valet consequentia.'

<sup>r</sup> Acts xiv. 16.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. xvii. 30.



this is not so agreeable to the sense of the Greek word,<sup>t</sup> as if we rendered it, 'During the times of this ignorance, God having overlooked them,' that is, the Gentiles, 'hath now commanded all men every where to repent;' and, if they were disregarded by him, they could not be supposed to be the objects of his special grace, or to have a right and title to salvation. Moreover, the apostle Paul, when speaking of some among the heathen who, notwithstanding their being destitute of gospel-light, excelled others in wisdom, casts the utmost contempt on those attainments in the knowledge of divine things which they gloried in, as being insufficient to salvation. Hence he says that, whatever they knew of the perfections of the divine nature, so far as these may be known without divine revelation, yet 'by wisdom they knew not God;' and he adds, 'Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?'<sup>u</sup>

It is objected, that it is contrary to the goodness of God to condemn persons for invincible ignorance, as that of the heathen must be supposed to be, since it was impossible for them to know the way of salvation by a Redeemer. But we must distinguish between God's condemning persons for not knowing the gospel, which is to condemn them for invincible ignorance; and his not giving the gospel, as a necessary means of grace and salvation, to a great part of the world, whom he designed, as we formerly observed, to overlook, and suffer to walk in their own ways. If the goodness of God had laid a natural obligation on him, without an act of his sovereign will, to bestow the means of grace, or the knowledge of the way of salvation on them, then it would have been contrary to his divine perfections to have denied the gospel to any, and so to condemn those who are ignorant of it. But it is one thing for God to leave them in their fallen state, the result of which is their not knowing the way of salvation; and another thing for him to condemn them for not knowing it, as if there were no other reason obliging him to inflict his righteous judgment on them,\*

It is farther objected, that the apostle says, 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them;'<sup>x</sup> and, 'When the Gentiles, which have not the law,' that is, any other law than that of nature, 'do by nature, the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing them witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.'<sup>y</sup> From this it is argued that the Gentiles have sufficient knowledge of the divine law to bring them into a state of salvation; their consciences being said to 'excuse them,' that is, not to charge guilt upon them, so that they are justified by walking according to the dictates of the light of nature. But as to the former of the scriptures quoted, 'That which may be known of God, is manifest in them, or showed to them,' the apostle does not speak of those things which are to be known of God which have an immediate reference to salvation; nor does he say that every thing necessary to be known of him in order to salvation is manifest in them. What he says, is, 'that of God which is known by them,'<sup>z</sup> is from him as the God of nature; 'he has shown it to them,' that is, as he adds in the following context, he has given them sufficient light to discover his 'eternal power and Godhead,' in a way of reasoning 'from the things that are made.' But the eternal power and Godhead may be known by those who are destitute of that knowledge which is necessary to salvation. As to the other scripture quoted, in which the Gentiles are said 'to do by nature the things contained in the law,' the apostle does not infer from this fact that they are the servants of God, or willing subjects to his government, or indeed that they fulfil the law of nature. Hence, we cannot suppose that he concludes them to be justified thereby; which is contrary to the whole tenor of his doctrine in other parts of his writings. It is true, he says that 'their consciences' sometimes 'excuse,' as well as at other times 'accuse them;' yet it must be considered that conscience may excuse, or plead not guilty, with respect to the charge of some crimes which are committed by others, when, at the same time their doing so does not exempt them from the guilt of sin in general, or give them a right and title to eternal life. The apostle, therefore, designs

<sup>t</sup> ὑπιστάμεναι.

u 1 Cor. i. 20.

x Rom. i. 19.

y Chap. ii. 14, 15.

z το γνωστέον του Θεου.

only to show how far the corruption of men may be restrained by their attending to the dictates of the light of nature, whereby much sin and guilt might be prevented. But he does not determine that God has any farther design of grace towards them. If God had had any such design, he would have given them the means of salvation; and if he has not said that he will save them, without giving them these means, we have no ground to assert that he will; for to do so, would be to draw a conclusion, without sufficient evidence from scripture.

Another objection is this: it is said that 'the goodness of God leadeth to repentance;'<sup>a</sup> but repentance is certainly connected with salvation; therefore the goodness or bounty of God, which persons who have no other light but that of nature have some knowledge of, may lead them to salvation. But it is evident that the apostle in this scripture speaks not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews; for, having, in the preceding chapter, considered the vile abominations which were practised by the Gentiles, he in this reproves the Jews when he says, 'Thou art inexcusable, O man that judgest, and yet dost the same things';<sup>b</sup> and, 'Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.'<sup>c</sup> Now, if the apostle is speaking to them when he says, 'The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,' we are to understand hereby, not only the bounty of common providence, or those effects of the divine goodness which are known and experienced by the whole world, but the goodness of God which they had experienced who were its peculiar objects, who were favoured by him above all the rest of the world, 'to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.'<sup>d</sup> Certainly, therefore, they were highly to blame, that they were not hereby led to repentance.

It is farther objected that the apostle, in disputing with the Athenians, puts them upon 'seeking after God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.'<sup>e</sup> From this it is argued that, if it were impossible to find God; that is, the way of acceptance in his sight, by the light of nature, it would have been a preposterous thing for the apostle to have put them upon seeking him; so that, from his address to them, we may infer that the heathen are not destitute of all means of grace, or without a possibility of salvation. Now if, by 'seeking the Lord,' the apostle means inquiring into the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and pressing after faith in him, as it is said, 'Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you';<sup>f</sup> 'If thou seek him, he will be found of thee';<sup>g</sup> this does not argue that the heathen, before the gospel was preached to them, might, in seeking the way of salvation, find it. For, though he is speaking to the heathen, they are considered, at the time of his doing so, as having the gospel preached to them by him, and therefore not destitute of the external means of grace; which he advises them to attend to, in hope that their endeavours might be successful. If, on the other hand, he speaks to them without regard to the privilege they then enjoyed, and so informs them what they might attain to without divine revelation, which is the only sense which seems in the least to favour the objection, then, by 'seeking the Lord,' we must understand their inquiring into the divine perfections, so far as their knowledge of these is attainable by the light of nature; and the consequence would be, their attaining such a degree of that knowledge as would discover the absurdity of the idolatry which they were guilty of, and which the apostle is arguing against. He makes use of a mode of speaking which is very agreeable to this sense of the text, when he says, 'If haply ye might feel after him.' This is a metaphor taken from those who are endeavouring to find their way in the dark, when they feel after things which they cannot see, and sometimes, by doing so, find them. His saying that 'haply,' or peradventure, 'you may find him,' implies that, though the heathen, by the light of nature, had some means of attaining such a measure of knowledge as would have given them a full conviction that there was but one God, and that this God ought to be worshipped in a way agreeable to his divine perfections, and consequently that they ought not to think that 'the Godhead was like to gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device,' so that they would have been

a Rom. ii. 4.  
e Acts xviii. 27.

b Verse 1.  
f Matt. vii. 7.

c Verse 17.  
g 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

d Rom. ix. 4.



effectually convinced as to the gross idolatry which they were charged with; yet some did not attend to the light of nature, so far as this amounts to, which was the case of those with whom he was disputing. His design, therefore, is to reprove their idolatry, and persuade them to seek after that knowledge of God which would have induced them to forsake it. This is his design in that part of his argument in which he speaks of their 'seeking the Lord, if haply they might feel after him;' and when, in another part of it, he treats of that knowledge of God which is more immediately connected with salvation, he speaks of 'Jesus and the resurrection,' though they treated what he said with ridicule and contempt. It does not follow, therefore, that the heathen, by the light of nature, had a sufficient discovery of the way of salvation.

There is another objection against the doctrine we are maintaining, founded on the case of some persons who are supposed to have been destitute of divine revelation, as living without the pale of the church, and yet are commended in scripture as men excelling many others in grace, concerning whom there is no reason to doubt that they were in a state of salvation; such as Melchizedek, Job, Job's friends, with whom the dispute was held, mentioned in the book of Job, the centurion concerning whom our Saviour says, 'Verily, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel,'<sup>a</sup> and Cornelius, whom we read of in the Acts of the Apostles; who were all supposed to be in a state of salvation, and yet reckoned among the heathen. As to Melchizedek, we have under a former Answer<sup>i</sup> given our sentiments who he was; and if what was there observed be true, it will render this objection of no force. But as the objection is founded on the commonly received opinion, that Melchizedek was a priest and a king in the land of Canaan, we may add that his having been so will make very little to the purpose; for, it is certain that he was not an idolater, or a stranger to revealed religion; so that it cannot be argued from his case, that they who are so, may be in a state of salvation. As to Job and his friends, it is certain that they were well acquainted with the revealed will of God, as appears from their discourses recorded in the book of Job; and to say that they were out of the pale of the church, as they did not descend from that branch of Abraham's family from which the Israelites came, will not do much service to the objection, unless it could be proved that they were strangers to the faith and way of salvation professed by the church. Under a former Answer,<sup>k</sup> we considered them as living before the scriptures were committed to writing, and also before the distinction between Jew and Gentile was much known in the world, or, at least, before the true worshippers of God had universally apostatized to idolatry. Hence, though many other nations were idolaters, and probably some were so in the country where they lived, yet it does not appear that they were so. Their case, therefore, cannot be brought as an argument, to prove that such as are destitute of the knowledge of the true God as founded on divine revelation, may be in the way of salvation. As to the centurion, though he was a Roman officer, it does not follow that, when he came to our Saviour, and expressed his great faith and humility, he was an heathen; for he had seen or heard of Christ's miracles and his doctrine, and probably might have been convinced thereby, and disposed to believe in him from conviction. It is certain, at least, that his words do not argue him to be an heathen; so that the part of the objection which refers to him is foreign to the design for which it is brought. As to Cornelius, there are certainly many things extraordinary in his character, such as that he was a 'devout man, and one that feared God;' that he gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always;<sup>l</sup> and that his prayers and his alms 'came up for a memorial before God;' all which expressions seem to favour the objection. Yet, if this account of him give ground to conclude that he was in a state of salvation before Peter was sent to preach the gospel to him, which the learned Beza<sup>m</sup> and others suppose, it must still be proved that he was altogether a stranger to divine revelation, and to the knowledge it conveys of the way of salvation, else the objection founded on his case is of no force. It is said, indeed, that 'he fell down at Peter's feet, and worshipped him;'<sup>n</sup> which seems to argue him to

<sup>a</sup> Matt. viii. 10. <sup>i</sup> See Quest. xlv.

<sup>k</sup> See Sect. 'Proofs that Election respects only a part of mankind,' under Quest. xii. xiii. <sup>l</sup> Acts x. 2. <sup>m</sup> Vid. Bez. in loc. <sup>n</sup> Acts x. 25.

have been, at that time, no better than a heathen idolater. But they who conclude him to have been then in a state of salvation, reckon this nothing else but an act of extraordinary civil respect; which, because it had the appearance of religious worship, Peter, as is intimated in the following words, refused to receive, lest some present should conclude that he gave him that honour which belongs to God only. All that I shall say, in answer to the objection, as supposing him to be in a state of salvation, is that though he was a Roman, and bred up in the Roman religion, yet it appears, from his general character, that he was very much concerned about the salvation of his soul, and therefore, doubtless, had not been wanting in his inquiries about the way to attain it. The gospel, indeed, had not been publicly preached at that time to the Gentiles, and he had not had any opportunity to converse with the apostles, or to sit under their ministry; but, as his conversation had been principally among the Jews, he might have been informed by them that, though they did not believe our Saviour who was crucified to be the Messiah, yet the Messiah was expected, and that, when he came, he would do that for his people which was foretold by the prophets. Here his faith rested. He wanted only a convincing evidence that our Saviour was he; and this, Peter was sent to communicate to him. We may suppose, however, that he was not converted before Peter was sent to him. This seems the more probable view; for, in Peter's relation of the matter to the apostles, he adds a particular circumstance which implies as much, namely, that 'he should tell him words, whereby he and all his house should be saved.'<sup>o</sup> This plainly argues that he and his house were not previously in a state of salvation; and, if so, the objection, which supposes that he was, is sufficiently answered. If we acquiesce in this answer, there is one difficulty which remains to be accounted for, namely, how his not having been in a state of salvation is consistent with his character as a devout man, fearing God, and having his prayers and his alms accepted by him. The only reply I shall give to this is, that some duties which are materially good may be performed by those who are not in a state of salvation; and that these works may, as far as they have any property of goodness in them, come up for a memorial before God. Thus God owned the humiliation, repentance, and reformation of the Ninevites. Thus, also, when one came to our Saviour, and told him how he had observed the commandments of God, and, at the same time, expressed an earnest desire to inherit eternal life; it is remarked that, though he would not part with all for Christ, and therefore was not to be reckoned a believer, yet 'Jesus beholding him, loved him,'<sup>p</sup> that is, he approved of what was good in him, though it wanted some circumstances which were necessary to constitute an action good in all respects. Why, then, may we not suppose that God approved of what was excellent in Cornelius' character before he was converted by Peter's preaching?

Another objection against the doctrine we are maintaining is, that the heathen had some means of salvation, which took their rise from divine revelation, as appears from several rules and modes of worship which they had by tradition from the Jews. It was a generally received opinion among them, that the sins they committed were, some way or other, to be expiated, or that some atonement was to be made for them; on which account they offered sacrifices, and had their temples, altars, and priests, consecrated for that purpose. These things, it is inferred, are more than they had learned from the law of nature. But this argument has very little weight. It seems, indeed, to allow that there is a necessity of persons being, at least, in a small degree, apprized of some doctrines which took their rise from divine revelation. But what was transmitted pure and uncorrupt to the church, was handed down to the heathen nations by uncertain tradition, and with a great mixture of corruption; so that it is hard to find such a resemblance between it and the pure doctrine as to determine it to be of divine origin. But suppose they had a conviction that sin was to be expiated by sacrifice, they had still no manner of idea as to any reference the sacrifices they offered had to Christ. Yet this, as the apostle observes, was the only thing in those sacrifices which were performed by a divine warrant, which had a tendency to 'take away sin,' or 'make



them that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.<sup>q</sup> Hence, though the Jews offered sacrifices, and observed several other rites of worship instituted by God; yet, inasmuch as they rested in the external performance of them, and were destitute of faith in Christ, and did not perform other religious duties which were to attend them, their observances were reckoned no better than 'vain oblations,'<sup>r</sup> or unprofitable services. How much more might all the rites of worship observed by the heathen be deemed so? The fact of the heathen having performed these rites, therefore, does not give us sufficient ground to conclude that those have the means of salvation who are destitute of divine revelation and faith in Christ.

*Christ the Saviour only of the Church.*

It is farther observed, in this Answer, that Christ is the Saviour only of his body the church. This seems to obviate an objection which might be brought against the impossibility of attaining salvation without faith in Christ. For some will be ready to conclude that Christ may be a Saviour, by his death, to those who are strangers to him, and not members of his body the church; and, therefore, it is added that he is the Saviour only of such. This is what several mean when they say that there is no salvation out of the pale or enclosure of the church. The point is rather to be explained than denied. The meaning of it will appear from what is said in the following Answers; wherein the visible church is described as including those who profess the true religion; and the invisible church is called 'the body,' of which Christ is 'the Saviour';<sup>s</sup> and the members of the latter are said to be made partakers of union and communion with him, and to be inseparably joined to him, as their Head and Husband, when they are effectually called, so that they have an interest in that salvation which he has procured. We hence have ground to conclude that he will save none by his merits but such as are made partakers of the internal graces of the Spirit, and are united to him by a lively faith, founded on divine revelation. This is accordant with what has been already maintained in this Answer; which establishes the necessity of divine revelation, or the impossibility of persons attaining salvation by framing their lives according to the light of nature, though they never heard of the gospel, or of Jesus Christ, the sum and substance of it. If this be reckoned a hard saying, tending to lessen the mercy of God with respect to its objects, it must be considered that we have no rule of judging concerning this matter but what is contained in scripture. If God has there made known to his people the only way of salvation, we have no warrant to extend it farther than he has done, or to say that, because he can apply his grace in such methods as are altogether unknown to us, he will do so. To speak in this way is no just or conclusive reasoning.

The great design of all that we have said in this Answer, is to induce us to set the highest value on Christ and his gospel, and to adore and magnify him for the privileges which we enjoy by being favoured with it, and to put us upon improving it to the best purposes; for if they are excluded from its benefits who never heard of it, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?'<sup>t</sup>

q Heb. ix. 9.

r Isa. i. 13.

s Eph. v. 23.

t Heb. ii. 3.

6H 148<sup>B</sup>











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